

MAUC Presidents Council Discusses Proposed Compliance Committees

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Editor's Note:

Many constituents have contacted the Mid-America Union Conference asking for a statement from the MAUC regarding the upcoming vote at Annual Council concerning the General Conference forming compliance committees. While the MAUC is not currently out of compliance on voted actions of the GC, our leaders are gravely concerned. To be informed regarding this critical discussion, read about the actions of the General Conference Administrative Committee and their proposal (links at the end of this statement).

Oct. 3, 2018

A Call for Fasting, Prayer and Christ-like Forbearance

During their recent annual meeting, the Mid-America Union Conference Presidents Council discussed their thoughts and concerns regarding the General Conference Administrative Committee's proposal to establish a new system of committees to assure compliance and uniformity within the world church that will be considered at the GC's Annual Council held Oct. 14-17 in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Following are beliefs and concerns on which all members of the Council agreed:

- We strongly support our Church's need to be able to hold its members and institutions accountable; however, **since 1903, the Church has had policies in place to deal with discipline issues for every level of the church**, from local congregations to the General Conference. We believe Ellen White's counsel to establish these policies is time honored, has the blessing of Heaven, and is appropriate for a Protestant church.
- We believe the proposal coming to Annual Council is a departure from the principles set forth in our *Working Policy* and, therefore, have **deep concerns with this new direction and are not supportive of the content of the proposed document** to be voted.
- **The trajectory of the Unity Committee is turning our membership against one another** and not bringing the unity the Committee was established to promote. The MAUC presidents all know churches, members, and families that are divided because of the Committee's proposed discipline strategy, and are turning against each other, creating a toxic environment.
- We believe the forming of these compliance committees puts **too much authority in the hands of a few individuals**.
- The idea of a simple majority vote for major decisions of discipline as outlined in the document is foreign to our Church and again **opens the door for abuse of power**.
- While the compliance committees might bring about the desired uniformity the Unity Committee is looking for, we have heard from enough of our constituents to know **we will lose the heart of many members**.
- We support the North American Division's approach to the non-compliance issues, which at the heart calls for **forbearance**. In essence, this is a call to heed Gamaliel's counsel in Acts 5:38-39: "So in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God" (NASB). In other words, **let God do the disciplining. We believe He will**, because in Heb. 12:6 we read, "The Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son" (NIV).
- Like others before us, we also want to invite our members to **fast and pray for God's presence and leading** at Annual Council. We have been given the Three Angels' Messages and have a profound work to do for our Savior. We believe this is God's Church and that He will lead us.

Comments for Consideration

"He [God] has never laid upon anyone the burden of making rules of action which will bind about and restrict the work, and confine the workers to a certain course of action.... if a board shall make rules that enter into the details of what the workers should do, no help will in any way come to those who are engaging in the work. The workmen are compelled to decide on the spot as to what they will do. The place, the circumstances, the interest, the moral sentiment of the people, will have to decide in many cases the course of action to be pursued."(EGW Letter 53, 1894, Manuscript Release 714).

“Laws and rules are being made at the centers of the work that will soon be broken into atoms....If the cords are drawn much tighter, if the rules are made much finer, if men continue to bind their fellow-laborers closer and closer to the commandments of men, many will be stirred by the Spirit of God to break every shackle, and assert their liberty in Christ Jesus....With [some strong administrators] it is rule or ruin” (EGW, RH, July 23, 1895, p. 465).

Related Articles

July 17: GC press release of document to be considered at Annual Council

<https://news.adventist.org/en/all-news/news/go/2018-07-17/administrative-committee-takes-step-forward-in-unity-process/>

Sept. 7: Press release outlining the five committees and listing their members

<https://news.adventist.org/en/all-news/news/go/2018-09-07/prayerful-process-continues-gc-adcom-embraces-unity/>

Sept. 18: Clarification statement and the activation of two committees

<https://news.adventist.org/en/all-news/news/go/2018-09-18/adcom-refers-to-compliance-committees/>