*"...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" Ephesians 3:17-19 (NIV).*

**From the Executive Committee of the Pacific Union Conference**

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we have hope and life!

We are a people united in the gospel of Jesus Christ, our love for one another, and our commitment to the mission of sharing God’s love and the message of salvation with our community and the world.

We come together with joy and thankfulness in worship and ministry each week, knowing that God will use the diversity of our history, circumstances, and gifts to bring the gospel to those around us.

The opportunity this creates is matched by an obligation to consciously and prayerfully protect our unity of purpose and mission from being threatened by factions or fissures, through faith in God and reliance on His strength and power. God has truly led us in our growth and development through these many years!

Our dependence upon the Holy Spirit and our willingness to be led are the bedrock of the commitments we have made to the church we love and the communities we are called to serve. We are blessed to be a part of the global fellowship of Seventh-day Adventists.

We have learned the truth of the words expressed by Ellen White that *“the secret of unity is found in the equality of believers in Christ” (Review and Herald, Dec. 22, 1891).*

Through God’s grace we have come to recognize that we only fully represent our shared faith and unity of purpose when we appreciate and respect one another. When the diverse perspectives and the dictates of conscience differ on important points, this takes on heightened significance. As members of a faithful and complex community, our unity and mission of effective witness call us to faithfulness in all things, including how we demonstrate respect for one another.

We are convicted that respect for the dictates of conscience and respect for one another are two sides of the same hand—extended in mission, ministry, and hope.

It is for these reasons that we voice our urgent objections to the proposed creation of “compliance committees” as formulated by the General Conference Administrative Committee and slated for an affirmative vote at the upcoming General Conference Annual Council. (See ANN, September 7, 2018 <https://news.adventist.org/en/all-news/news/go/2018-09-07/prayerful-process-continues-gc-adcom-embraces-unity/>.) There are four central concerns we share:

* The “compliance committee” apparatus transplants into the Seventh-day Adventist Church a de facto centralized system of governance that is both unprecedented in its scope and antithetical to our historical practice. It is alarming that a small group would possess authority to “develop and recommend to the General Conference Administrative Committee guidelines that explicitly describe the conduct and behavior of denominational employees” encompassing virtually every aspect of belief, faith practice, and ministry method.
* The “compliance committee” structure supplants and subverts our current constituent system of governance. The final evaluators of how Seventh-day Adventist teaching is expressed and who is acting as a genuine Seventh-day Adventist will no longer rest with local employers such as conference, union, and institutional presidents and their executive committees or boards. Any questions of denominational fidelity in teaching, practice, or ministry will be dispatched to the appropriate “compliance committee” wherein will reside the responsibility for investigation and the rendering of conclusions.
* The “compliance committee” configuration will have a corrosive effect on the existing bonds of trust and fellowship among church members and between members and their spiritual leaders. “Compliance committees” will require information to conduct their work, which can only be obtained by informants, reporters, and tips. An atmosphere of fear and suspicion will unseat the openness to present truth that has marked the spiritual life of Seventh-day Adventists heretofore.
* To our profound dismay, the proposed “compliance committee” pattern is not envisioned to reside only in the offices of the General Conference headquarters. The proposal from GCADCOM urges that “this model could also be adopted by other levels of church organization.” The replication of this type of investigatory methodology to church life would transform this church into something quite unrecognizable.

It is our prayerful call to Seventh-day Adventists, both in our Pacific Union territory as well as our brothers and sisters from every region of our church, to oppose the adopting of this new “compliance committee” system into our faith and practice. We ask that you not only pray but also express your convictions about this to duly appointed and elected church leaders.

These words of Ellen White are most appropriate for us at this time: *“Not a hand should be bound, not a soul discouraged, not a voice should be hushed; let every individual labor, privately or publicly, to help forward this grand work. Place the burdens upon men and women of the church, that they may grow by reason of the exercise, and thus become effective agents in the hand of the Lord for the enlightenment of those who sit in darkness” (Review and Herald, July 9, 1895).*

We are compelled by our shared faith to affirm our mission and sacred calling—and to state our conviction that *“he who began a good work in [us] will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6, NIV).*

— Executive Committee of the Pacific Union Conference

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