



Sermons

The Great Controversy

Magazine

Present Feature

Open Letter to the Pacific Union Conference Executive Committee

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12 September 2001

Regarding: Out of Order Constituency Meeting Vote Regarding
Commissioned President

Pacific Union Conference
c/o Secretary Ernest Castillo
P.O. Box 5005
Westlake Village, CA 91359

Open Letter to the Pacific Union Conference Executive Committee
(This letter is also coming by regular mail)

From Elder Larry Kirkpatrick, Pastor Mentone Church of SDA, SECC.

Dear Member of the Executive Committee of the Pacific Union Conference:

I address you as a member of our union conference constituency and as a minister employed in this Union. I write to bring to your attention an item of considerable concern to us all--the out of order action taken on August 27, 2001 at the recent

constituency meeting regarding our Union Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws Article VIII, Section II.

Modifications adopted at the August 27 meeting added the words "or commissioned" to section II indicating that a non-ordained minister could serve as our Union president. However, you will note the obvious contradiction introduced into the Bylaws by rereading Bylaws Article II which states that "All policies, purposes and procedures of this Union *shall be* in harmony with the working policies and procedures of the North American Division and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists." You will also note that the Working Policy North American Division of the General Conference (2000-2001 ed.) states that the president of a union conference shall be "an ordained minister of experience" (See Working Policy, p. 131)--not an "ordained, or commissioned" individual.

You will also note that a firm linkage is given between the matter of such officers voted by the world church in the wording of the Church Manual, p. 135 ("The president of the conference/mission/field should be an ordained minister of experience and good report. He stands at the head of the gospel ministry in his conference/mission/field and is the chief elder, or overseer, of all the churches"), as well as the Working Policy, p. 35: "B 03 10 Adherence to Policy required--The North American Division Working Policy shall be strictly adhered to by all organizations in every part of the division. The work of every organization shall be administered in full harmony with the policies of the division. No departure from these policies shall be made without prior approval from the North American Division Committee except as stated below All conference, mission, and institutional administrators and all committee/board members shall adhere to and cooperate in maintaining these policies as they affect the work in their respective organizations."

It is obvious and evident therefore that the Pacific Union Constitution and Bylaws have been placed both, out of harmony with themselves (the new conflict between Bylaws Article II and Article VIII, Section II), and also in direct conflict with the world church (Pacific Union Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws Article VIII, Section II compared with Church Manual, p. 135 and Working Policy, p. 131).

It is true that the constitution document given in Section CA of the Working Policy is given as a model. But it is also true that the wording given in it carefully distinguishes between essential wording (in bold print, see CA 10 05, p. 121), and non-bolded print as modifiable (Ibid.). You will notice that the wording given for the requirements for service as president are bolded (see p. 130), thus expressing "essential" and non-modifiable wording. Regarding this, we have, "This model

constitution shall be followed by all union conferences." Note also that such harmony is "essential to the unity of the church worldwide" (Ibid).

Your commission as representatives of the constituency requires you to investigate and act on these matters. The action taken at the recent Constituency meeting places us out of harmony with our world church, thus calling for the most immediate redress. May I urge you to include this matter as an agenda item at your November 15, 2001 meeting or earlier, and further, that after preparing a recommended revision of the Bylaws on this point in particular, that you call at the earliest opportunity a Special Session of the Pacific Union Constituency to adopt revisions bringing us once again into harmony with our world church. Whether any of us prefers or disagrees with the voted position of the world church on the gender and commissioning issues, we are not free to go our own way; we are not to be captains in rebellion. Let us redress the matter immediately and thus inspire confidence and unity in our brothers and sisters around the world sharing our hope in Jesus. Let us move in perfect order and unity.

Thank you for your attention and kind regards. Please communicate to me the outcome of your deliberations on this matter, and/or any further questions you may have. You may consider this a formal and official request made to the Pacific Union.

Sincerely, and in the blessed hope we share in common,

Elder Larry Kirkpatrick
Pastor, Mentone Church of Seventh-day Adventists
Southeastern California Conference of SDA

End

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Last Modified 12 September 2001 larry@greatcontroversy.org