

English version of news article regarding appeal from Norwegian Union Conference

Warning from General Conference appealed

By Tor Tjeransen, Communication Director, Norwegian Union Conference

In February, the Norwegian Union Conference appealed the General Conference vote of warning from Annual Council 2019.

The Norwegian Union Conference has appealed the warning voted by Annual Council 2019 regarding policy variance in connection with credentialing of women pastors and has now received a response from the General Conference. The appeal did not result in any changes.

In October 2019, the Annual Council of the General Conference voted to warn the Norwegian Union Conference and five other unions. The warning was issued because these unions follow a credentialing practice, which the General Conference maintains is at odds with the Working Policy. After a thorough discussion, the Norwegian Union Conference Executive Committee decided to ask the administration to submit an appeal of the vote from Annual Council. The opinion of the Union Executive was that the vote at Annual Council was made on false premises and that the adopted procedure for handling the ordination issue was not followed.

On February 6, the Norwegian Union Conference submitted its appeal. The union administration did not know how the appeal would be dealt with beyond the fact that the General Conference had designated the General Conference Administrative Committee (ADCOM) as the appeal body. At short notice, the Union administration was invited to a video meeting with the General Conference leadership. The meeting took place on February 25 without a set agenda. Ted N. C. Wilson, President of the General Conference, chaired the meeting and commented on the matter before inviting Victor Marley, Norwegian Union Conference President and Finn F. Eckhoff, Norwegian Union Conference Secretary to give their comments. Organizational Secretary G. T. Ng and Treasurer Juan Prestol-Puesán of the General Conference each gave comments towards the end of the hour-long meeting. Undersecretary Hensley Mooroooven of the General Conference and members of the administration of the Trans-European Division were observers at the meeting.

The Norwegian Union Conference chose not to make the appeal document public before it had been considered by ADCOM. Following advice from the Trans-European Division, publication was postponed until the appeal process was completed. There was concern that disclosure could interfere with the appeal and the goodwill between the parties.

The General Conference addressed the appeal in a video meeting of ADCOM on March 17. On March 24, the Norwegian Union Conference received an undated letter with the result of the appeal. On March 17 the appeal document was read in its entirety at the ADCOM meeting, but no-one in the committee made any proposal to adopt any change in the matter. The warning stands unchanged since ADCOM did not vote on the matter.

Victor Marley and the other members of the Norwegian Union Conference administration had wanted an appeal process that involved a body different from the one that originally placed the recommendation of a warning before the Annual Council, and a clearer framework for how the appeal should be handled.

“This process has not been perfect, but has nevertheless been characterized by a good tone and a recognition that we work for the same cause,” Marley said, noting that the General Conference in its

letter states that we are united in the proclamation of the gospel in the setting of the three angel's messages to hasten that great day when our Lord will return.

“We want to take that positive attitude with us in our discussions in Norway. We may have different perspectives, but we are united in our mission and our desire for Jesus to come soon. I would like to thank my colleagues and friends in leadership of the General Conference, the Trans-European Division and the Norwegian Union Conference for the dialogue we have had regarding the appeal”, Marley concludes.