

FOURTEENTH BUSINESS MEETING

Sixtieth General Conference session, July 10, 2015, 9:30 a.m.

ELLA SIMMONS: It is time to call the business session to order. We have a few announcements. There are a few people in the aisles this morning. I suspect that you are trying to follow instructions of an earlier announcement regarding the return of your voting devices. While we appreciate that, we would like for that to happen a bit more discreetly and/or outside the time of the business session.

We have here on the platform with us, as always, to my right, and your left, Todd McFarland, our parliamentarian, who has served us throughout the session.

To my left, our secretary this morning is Agustin Galicia, and the recording secretary is Tammy Boward. I am Ella Simmons, who will chair the session this morning. And we welcome you. It is Friday. That's a bit of the spirit we are feeling in this room.

Yes, the preparation day, as we shared in Steering Committee this morning. We Adventists have a special appreciation for Friday, the day of preparation, and this very special day of preparation for what we will do when we leave this place.

Thank you so much for your decorum. We will have just a few announcements before we go to our prayer session this morning.

If there are any members of the Nominating Committee remaining in the room, please go directly and immediately to the Nominating Committee meeting room. The Nominating Committee has an item for which to care this morning.

As we move to looking at *Church Manual* items this morning, we need to ask the Lord for very special guidance. We need to ask again for the Holy Spirit to be with us, not only for process, but for our ability to hear God's will on all things, and then specifically on these items.

Let us take a few minutes to pray with a partner or two. Pray what is on your heart. But I ask you, please pray specifically for this session as we bring all of these items to conclusion, I hope, and then commence to implement these.

At the end of the prayer session Agustin Galicia will have the closing prayer for that prayer session, and then we will move forward.

I'm just giving a few more moments for the remainder of the movement. Thank you so much. Let us now go to our knees with a partner or two, plead with the Lord for whatever is on your heart. Let us continue in the joyous spirit in which we began this day. Let us pray.

[Prayer.]

AGUSTIN GALICIA: Let us pray.

[Prayer.]

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. This morning, we believe we have time to complete the tasks before us. However, we will attempt to move at your pace.

I do want to pause just for a moment to express appreciation to the translators. There have been some challenges, but they have done an outstanding job. Let us appreciate them.

[Applause.]

Our agenda this morning will include a report from the Nominating Committee that we will take at the time they are ready, perhaps early. And it is our understanding that this report will consist of one item, unless there are changes there during the course of their meeting. We will also at some point during this morning, as possible, will have a response to the requests regarding our hermeneutic. We planned and had pledged to respond today, so that will come during the session, if at all possible.

And then we have eight items from the *Church Manual* Committee, eight items that have been referred back for further consideration. And we will take each of those.

I'm getting a note. Special music is waiting. Thank you. I didn't see them. So I thought I would move forward with an announcement. Thank you very much. We are ready for you.

[Song.]

Angela Bryant-Brown, thank you so much for the beautiful music.

We are nearing the end of our agenda, and as I indicated, we do have *Church Manual* items for the morning.

The items will be shared on the screen, as in previous sessions, so we do want to queue up for that, and I want to share with you the items, and then we will call those who will present to us.

And yet, even before we can put the items on the floor before you, there are four individuals at the microphones. I must assume that the individuals at the microphones have information that will serve to assist or to clarify points in the material that we are about to present.

According to the item that you see on the screen, there is material available to be distributed to the delegations. So perhaps, as this list grows, we will begin to test the nature of your contributions.

So with that, we will go to microphone 6, Berit Elkjaer from the Trans-European Division. Please, what is the nature of your comment at this point?

BERIT ELKJAER: Mrs. Chair, can you allow me two questions? The first is regarding the motion I made on Tuesday, and it's regarding our fundamental beliefs. I had a motion, and it was referred back to the Steering Committee. I just wonder when I'll have a feedback on that.

ELLA SIMMONS: Please remind us the nature of that item, or the focus, your request?

BERIT ELKJAER: Oh, yes. I had the motion that we should have a committee working with the way we use the words in the fundamental beliefs.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. I'll come back after you share your second item. I will respond. Your second item?

BERIT ELKJAER: My second question is related to the no vote on women's ordination. According to the law of our country, we are forced to give women and men equal possibilities for advancement in their work.

My question is: How does the General Conference expect us to deal with that?

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. Thank you very much.

In regard to your first item, we actually responded on Tuesday, and I think we perhaps could have addressed that just a bit on Thursday as well. We indicated at that time that there are ongoing discussions regarding the fundamental beliefs and that the General Conference maintains a public statements committee, a writing committee, that looks at these kinds of items.

All of the responses to the documents that have been put before you, the suggestions, the ideas that have been brought forth in this process have been collected by the current team. And as was indicated by the leader of that team, and I think the chair as well, we would want the process to continue over time and for us to maintain what has already been established in an ongoing or a continuous process that allows for discussions at the General Conference, at least, and, as has been our experience, at the division levels. And we receive input from the divisions. And information is shared, and there are deliberations at various meetings that will not allow the suggestions, the ideas, your pleas, to be lost.

So that is the first item.

And the second item, at this point, all of the questions, concerns, including one that I think you brought to the floor perhaps on Wednesday, regarding the legal nature of the dilemma that you face, we deal with these, perhaps on a daily basis, as we work with the worldwide church trying to keep up with the challenges that you have before you.

But these also are processed through the divisions.

So I appreciate your reminding us to keep these before the divisions and, as appropriate, to bring those to the General Conference level in the discussions. Thank you so much for that.

Going to microphone 2, Andrew Smith from the North American Division.

ANDREW SMITH: Good morning, Madam Chair. I rise in recognition of the large number of student volunteers to this sixtieth General Conference session. They are doing a commendable job, and I think we need to recognize them for their service, not only to this convention, but also their service to God.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you so very much. Let us make the official recording and acknowledge them with our appreciation expressed this morning.

[Applause.]

Thank you. Microphone 3, Alvin Kibble, North American Division.

ALVIN KIBBLE: Madam Chairman, I rise for a question of privilege. Today, as we conclude the business of our sixtieth General Conference session, I think we would be remiss if we did not pause in a

moment of silence for the nine people who were murdered when they gathered one night for Bible study at a landmark church, whose history from slavery to the Civil War to the present is inseparable from our nation's angry struggle with race.

This massacre in Charleston, South Carolina, at the Emanuel AME Church, where the Reverend Clementa C. Pinckney, the church pastor, a prominent state senator, was among the dead, which involved victims ranging in age from 26 to 87, has left people of all faiths stunned and grieving.

Witnesses said that the perpetrator sat with the church members for an hour in Bible study before opening fire on the entire group. The Adventist Church has had a long history of standing up for the rights of all people, and we have always believed that injustice for one group of believers is injustice for all groups of believers.

So it is important that the remnant church continue to pray for the safety of all people of faith as we strive to advance the gospel in troubling times. Who would have ever imagined that, in the year 2015, the church would cease to be a safe haven and a place where hatred and evil would never flourish?

Many states are beginning to remove the Confederate flag from their state capitol grounds because of the statement this flag makes in certain communities. Governor Nikki Haley probably said it best when she said, "This flag, while an integral part of our past, does not represent the future of our great state."

As true believers, we are aware that even in the worst of tragedies we have seen the great power of God to heal the brokenhearted and to offer grace and mercy to all people, so I am admonishing—

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you.

ALVIN KIBBLE: —the leadership of [loss of audio] forefront to public affairs and religious liberty to pray for people of all faith groups as we—

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you, Brother Kibble.

Typically this item probably would not be recognized at this moment. However, in that we have already declared and have already planned for an appropriate prayer session for this afternoon's session, I'm going to express appreciation for your calling our attention to this this morning. And we will

conclude this as we pray in our concluding prayers, assuming that we will not complete our work in advance of the scheduled time this morning. Thank you.

We have Kathryn Profitt on microphone 4.

KATHRYN PROFITT: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I believe that the Lord has a special calling for women in ministry. In light of our vote on Wednesday, I would like to make a request for referral.

Madam Chair, this is not a motion, but a request for referral. I would like you to—

ELLA SIMMONS: Excuse me. Perhaps at a time when we have an item on the table with which this request would align would be a better time, and the chair will be happy to recognize you at that time.

The chair pleads with the body: Let us get into the business. I'm sure that your items will align with something. I hear what you're saying. I understand where you want to go, and I think I hear and understand the spirit in which you're offering this. But with the *Church Manual* items, there could very easily be an alignment for that. Thank you so much.

KATHRYN PROFITT: Thank you, Madam.

ELLA SIMMONS: And please examine your item. I'll give you a moment, the three who remain at the microphones. If there is something that can be aligned with one of the items of business that we would like to bring before you this morning, please hold your comment until then.

The Nominating Committee is coming in, I understand, so that will give you an opportunity to achieve that understanding of alignment, to bring your item back later, if you will. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Homer Trecartin, are you here? Thank you very much.

HOMER TRECARTIN: Thank you. And we are bringing you the final, final Nominating Committee report. We had a caucus meet yesterday and brought one more recommendation, and so we are bringing that to you now.

Our secretary, Dr. Leslie Pollard, will read that and make the motion.

LESLIE POLLARD: And, Madam Chair, the Nominating Committee wishes to recommend for the position of secretary to the Northern Asia-Pacific Division the name of Elder Yutaka Inada, and I move it.

AGUSTIN GALICIA: Seconded.

ELLA SIMMONS: We have the motion for secretary of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, and we have support for that item.

HOMER TRECARTIN: And, Madam Chair—

ELLA SIMMONS: Gentlemen.

HOMER TRECARTIN: —he is currently the secretary of the Japan Union.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. His name has been considered in the appropriate manner, and his current position indicating his experience has been shared with the body.

I paused a moment because, at some points, there have been photographs. I do not see one this morning. And I understand that he is not here. Is that correct? He is here?

HOMER TRECARTIN: He is here, and we will introduce him if this is voted, but we didn't have a chance to get the photograph.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. We have the motion. What is your pleasure? You ready? No. OK. We see no other individuals coming to the microphone.

With that, all in favor of the motion, please express your approval with the uplifted green card.

All opposed, would you please use the same sign?

It is carried.

Please introduce the new secretary of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division.

HOMER TRECARTIN: Thank you. We would like to have Pastor Inada come in, and you can welcome him.

[Applause.]

ELLA SIMMONS: We pause for the photograph. Thank you, Elder Trecartin and Dr. Pollard.

Elder Trecartin, does this conclude the work of the Nominating Committee? Do you have a word for us?

HOMER TRECARTIN: Yes. That is the end of the Nominating Committee. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Shall we express appreciation to the Nominating Committee?

[Applause.]

That was a hasty retreat.

I still see three names here. Let's see what we can do with these. Microphone 3, Will Comley, North American Division.

WILL COMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

My question has to do with the process. It's not to do with a motion; it's to do with the process. And I don't wish—

ELLA SIMMONS: I'm sorry. Are you speaking of the process we have initiated this morning?

WILL COMLEY: No. Of the General Conference session, just a question probably for the parliamentarian. May I ask that?

ELLA SIMMONS: I will allow you to begin, but we would like to get into this morning's business and at the same time allow for you to engage in this continuing conversation. The chair is not insensitive to where you are and what you hope to do. I'm looking at the appropriateness of the time. But we do want this. If you would give us just a snippet, we can then determine how we can address this before the day is over.

WILL COMLEY: All right. Thank you. When someone—

ELLA SIMMONS: A point of order has been called. I'm sorry. Microphone 3, Henry Fordham III, North American Division, point of order.

HENRY FORDHAM: I am not trying to instruct the chair, but just a question: Wouldn't it not be proper to dismantle the Nominating Committee since their work is done?

ELLA SIMMONS: At the appropriate time. We will determine the time on that. Thank you very much for that good reminder.

We will hear the introduction to Brother Comley's question. I sense that it is bigger than one sentence. So please just give us the nature, and then let us come back to you.

WILL COMLEY: When a person wants to extend debate and hundreds of people are queued in ahead of them and an incidental motion does not get put to the front of the queue, what process they can take to rescind a motion? I felt as though there were some people who would like to have extended the debate on Wednesday. And I'm not here to rehash that.

But I think 51 percent of us are laypeople, and we did not know how to extend that debate, besides coercing someone who was already queued in.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you so much. I understand what you're saying, and we're going to attempt to give that during the afternoon session. I appreciate that, and we do not want that to be lost.

While we do business here, we do expect and it is our desire that these sessions would also serve to edify the body.

Microphone 5, Lauro Gonzalez Arellano.

LAURO GONZALEZ ARELLANO [translated]: May the peace of God abide among all of us here present. Good morning, Sister Simmons.

ELLA SIMMONS: Good morning, my brother.

LAURO GONZALEZ ARELLANO [translated]: I address to you at this time because I had a prayer, and it was as follows. I have a comment that will not take more than two minutes, but I would appeal to your mercy. But I think it would be very helpful for us.

I told the Lord this morning that if it was you who would be at the chair, you would take my participation. And I see the Lord granted this, my petition, as a sign.

ELLA SIMMONS: But your time is running out.

LAURO GONZALEZ ARELLANO [translated]: It has nothing to do with what you are dealing with at the agenda at this time, the *Church Manual*. But I think if you would grant me just a second, then I can really say it.

ELLA SIMMONS: My brother, if you would just simply tell us the nature of your question, we will determine when that could come before us.

LAURO GONZALEZ ARELLANO [translated]: My concern is the following: We all have people who are diseased and sick where we live. And so we like to pray, sing with them, and those of us who are working with evangelism we see that sometimes the Lord raises them up and heals them.

ELLA SIMMONS: Brother Arellano, I think I understand. And perhaps you could even approach me after this session so that we can assist in directing on that. I appreciate your fervor, I appreciate your concern for the body, and I appreciate your respect for the chair and for the process. Thank you so much.

We have microphone 4, Saustin Mfunne, General Conference.

SAUSTIN MFUNE: Madam Chair, I want to thank the technical team for having these microphone stands—

ELLA SIMMONS: Brother Mfunne, I'm sorry. Are you calling for a special recognition at this point?

SAUSTIN MFUNE: Yes.

ELLA SIMMONS: Please, let's move that along and let us express our appreciation.

SAUSTIN MFUNE: Thank you. Madam Chair, I would like to say something concerning what has transpired already. South Africa was recognized after their independence—

ELLA SIMMONS: Brother Mfunne.

SAUSTIN MFUNE: Yes.

ELLA SIMMONS: Let us take this later. Thank you so very much. I appreciate your offering.

We're going to stay at microphone 4 with Neale Schofield from the South Pacific Division.

NEALE SCHOFIELD: Thank you, Lady Chair. I have a suggestion. During the past week we have wasted literally hours in points of order that are not points of order and people coming to the microphone with inappropriate comments. My suggestion is that there is some form of vetting process in the future to stop people coming to the microphone and wasting everybody's time.

Would it be appropriate to have a full-time parliamentarian that people can go to with their questions or comments before they get to the microphone and waste people's time?

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you so much for the suggestion, and, as indicated earlier, we actually have received that suggestion. We heard that, and we hear you this morning in reemphasizing this.

Certainly this is something we should consider for the General Conference rules of order in the future. Thank you very much.

And we will call Elder Miranda and Elder Wahlen to the podium, please. We are going to consider the eight items from the *Church Manual* that still remain. And we would give them time to present, in any order they choose. The items for this morning's agenda are the church board and its meetings, reasons for discipline, church organization today, unauthorized speakers, General Conference the highest authority, communion service, licensed ministers, and credentials and licenses. We appreciate the years—not just hours or days or weeks or months, but the years—that have gone into this work. And then even right up to late last night, this body, this team, received final input from members of the body.

It is the report to the chair this morning that was brought to the team last evening and prior has been considered. And in almost all cases, adjustments have been made. So please pay special attention to the presentations that will come before you.

And I implore you to keep in mind that we are dealing with millions of people, and then thousands here working in this process, and everyone has an opinion. And of course, that team, we all are trying to reconcile, trying to merge greatly diverging perspectives and differing opinions. So please take into consideration that if your suggestion or your motion or your idea has not been included exactly as you expect or desire to hear it, it has been balanced with the very specific expectation of someone else. This is the attempt. I want to see how far we can get this morning. It still is possible that we can complete all eight items this morning, but let us see what we can do.

Elder Miranda.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Thank you, Madam Chair.

ELLA SIMMONS: Or perhaps I should say “Dr. Miranda” in expression of appreciation for the academic work that you’ve done also.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Thank you, Sister Chair.

We would like to thank those delegates who met with us two days ago. The *Church Manual* Committee has heard them, their suggestions, their comments. We also took note of the comment received here, and we discussed carefully each one of the comments and suggestions. We also received in writing some of the suggestions. So now we are ready to present to you some of the adjustments and changes that are according to the suggestions, and the majority of them we accepted. In other cases, we just maintained the same item for some reason that we’re going to explain when the time has come.

I’m going to ask the secretary of the *Church Manual* Committee, Harald Wollan, to introduce the items.

HARALD WOLLAN: Thank you. The first item we’ll look at is item 401, which you find on page 91.

The question was raised and the reason for referring it back was that it was felt that the issue made a greater distinction between the *Church Manual* and *Working Policy* than necessary.

The *Church Manual* Committee looked at the issue, and we want to explain to you that when we come back to you with the same wording, it is because we probably need to underline that we are talking about representation. We’re talking about how members are represented at sessions in the church, in the conferences, and so on.

So, Madam Chair, we are bringing to you the same wording without any change. I move the acceptance of this.

AGUSTIN GALICIA: Seconded.

ELLA SIMMONS: We have the motion for the approval of the amendments to the *Church Manual* as were indicated on the screen and presented. And we have a second.

Are there questions or comments?

Seeing none, we move directly to action. All in favor, please express your favor by raising your green card. Thank you.

All opposed with the same sign. Thank you.

It is carried. We have one down.

HARALD WOLLAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The next item is 402. You'll find it on page 92. This one has come back, and we have come back with new wording, and the new wording is on the screen.

When the issue was raised bringing it back to the *Church Manual* Committee, the objection was that there was no way of appeal further than just one step.

We are coming back to you with a different wording, and I will read it to you. It's from line 24 and onward.

“When differences arise in or between churches and conferences or institutions, matters that are not mutually resolved may be appealed to the next higher organization. If the matter does not get resolved at this level, the aggrieved entity may appeal to successively higher levels of organization. An organization to which an appeal is forwarded may choose not to hear the matter, in which case the decision of the highest organization involved in the dispute shall be final.”

I move this.

AGUSTIN GALICIA: Seconded.

ELLA SIMMONS: We have the motion and support for the motion. In a moment we will see the motion on the screen. You now have the recommended changes. The motion is to amend the *Church Manual* as presented.

We have two individuals at the microphone for a question or comment. Microphone 2, Ronald Oliver, North American Division.

RONALD OLIVER: Could we have the actual wording on the screen?

ELLA SIMMONS: Yes. We can have the wording of the proposed amendment.

RONALD OLIVER: I think there's a little bit of confusion in the last sentence. My understanding of this process is that the dispute would go to the lowest level of organization that is not involved in the dispute. And in the last sentence it says that "the decision of the highest organization involved in the dispute shall be final." And the organization that accepts the appeal would be an organization that's not involved in the dispute. And so it should say, "In which case the decision of the highest organization to which that dispute was appealed would be final."

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. We'll turn to Harald Wollan and Armando Miranda.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Perhaps we need to make some adjustment there—but we are not talking about the organization that is involved in the dispute itself. We are just referring to the next level of the organization that is dealing with the appeal and not involved in that. If we can find another word and perhaps, by common consent, we can make this element clearer.

ELLA SIMMONS: As the speaker indicated, as worded here, this could be a bit misleading or unclear, and I hear you saying that another word could be substituted. We need to determine how we would handle this, so we will receive this information and go to the next speaker.

On microphone 2, we have Adwoa Addo, West-Central Africa Division.

ADWOA ADDO: Thank you, Madam Chair. If we could have the wording back on the screen.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. Thank you.

ADWOA ADDO: It says, "When differences arise, if the matter does not get resolved at this level, the aggrieved entity may appeal to the successively higher levels of organization. An organization to whom an appeal is forwarded may choose not to hear the matter." I think that that would be a denial of people's rights or institutional rights of the appeal. Because if we are appealing and the organization may choose either to deal or not to deal with it, it wouldn't be worth appealing to that organization.

So rather it should read, "The organization to whom an appeal is forwarded may decide on the appeal as they deem fit or refer it to the next successive organization to be dealt with appropriately." That would be denying institutions the right of appeal or the right to be heard. Thank you very much.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you for your observation. We have on microphone 4, Clinton Wahlen.

CLINTON WAHLEN: Thank you, Sister Chair. I agree with the two previous speakers, and especially the last one. It's this final sentence that really still eliminates any right of appeal, because there is no way of getting to be heard at the General Conference Executive Committee or even here at the session if there is no satisfactory resolution.

I think this is a very basic right. We're talking about disputes between churches, conferences, institutions, entities of the church, and we need to preserve that right for them. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you for that observation. Microphone 6, Boyce Mkhize, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

BOYCE MKHIZE: Thank you, Madam Chair. At the last sitting that considered this matter, there was a question raised about whether or not there are challenges with regard to the consideration of appeals at the higher level of the organization. The answer was not necessarily forthcoming in this regard, and neither was there any rationale provided for why this curtailment of an appeal process is being proposed.

In the country from which I come, this kind of a provision would be unconstitutional because it offends administrative law considerations. You may not, as an entity, deny to hear or refuse to hear an appeal that is placed before you. So, in effect, the proposition that is put there will become invalid.

And therefore I align myself with the latest speaker that spoke to the adjustment of the wording in that particular provision, otherwise that particular provision denies the fundamental rights and the administration law processes that are supposed to be guaranteed to the entities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. Elder Miranda or Elder Wollan, would you like to share the nature and the outcome of your discussions on this topic?

ARMANDO MIRANDA: We have considered this item like the other one with great concern. And we consider, after consultation with the group and also the suggestion that we received, that this is the recommendation of the *Church Manual* Committee. You may vote in favor or against, but it is in your hands to decide. If it's voted down, we need to wait until the next GC session, if we don't have time to deal with this during the rest of the business session here or the time of the GC session.

ELLA SIMMONS: Let's move to microphone 3. We have Frank Hasel from the Inter-European Division.

FRANK HASEL: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I concur with the previous speakers, and I would like to move to refer this back for rewriting at the appropriate committee.

ELLA SIMMONS: I think we heard Elder Miranda indicate that this will be our last opportunity to express the body's acceptance or rejection of the proposed amendments as you find here presented.

If this is referred back, perhaps you did not intend for this to be a subliminal or an indirect way of rejecting the item. But, in essence, as Elder Miranda has indicated, this would result in leaving the item as is until the next General Conference session, in 2020. I am not sure if there would be any opportunity for substantive adjustment between now and this afternoon.

The next speaker is—I'm remembering that you offered a motion, not just a suggestion.

Is there a second? Is there support for that motion? OK. We do see support.

And we need to hear a bit if the other speakers in line just happen to be there for this purpose.

This might be convenient to move forward. If there are others who need to speak directly, I believe it is in order that we take them before the vote.

Thank you. OK. Is there someone else? All right. We see someone moving to the microphone for that purpose. Then we will move to take action on the referral.

Microphone 2, Jay Gallimore, North American Division.

JAY GALLIMORE: Thank you kindly, Sister Chairman. I believe that the referral is a good thing. It's not going to hurt anything, because it will just simply leave the language that's there. And this has served us well for many years. My understanding is that there was only one division where this was somewhat of a little problem. Outside of that, it's not overwhelming the church, it's not urgent. And I think the motion to refer is a good thing that will give us more time to think it through carefully, and so I support the amendment.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. Microphone 2 again, please.

JAY GALLIMORE: I'm sorry. I meant I support the motion to refer, not the amendment. It's not an amendment.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. Now, we're looking at a growing number of speakers at the microphone. We assume that the level A items—the level A entries—are for those who are speaking to the current motion, not the original motion, but the motion to refer.

OK. They have not been reordered. So we will go, then, to microphone 5, John Bradshaw, General Conference.

JOHN BRADSHAW: Thank you, Madam Chair. It would seem to me that to refer this would be far preferable than to move forward with what appears to be a denial of process. I'm mystified as to why the writers of this have pushed forward with something that seems to, very simply, deny process. And so if this can go back and be looked at again, I believe we'd be far better off with this sitting on the shelf for five years than to press forward with something that will not serve in a manner of justice the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you for your comment. Microphone 6, Paul Ratsara, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

PAUL RATSARA: Madam Chair, I would like us really to refer this back. It will be easier. And as it was said already, the one that we have now serves us well. So I support the referral of this motion.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. Microphone 3, Roscoe Howard, North American Division.

ROSCOE HOWARD: Yes, Madam Chairman, I would speak against the referral. I think the practical purpose of this new written document is to really try to mitigate against everyone wanting to go to the General Conference to have their plea heard. I think that there are levels that, once it goes one or two levels, they are far enough removed to make a decision.

I know that any church that has a concern or a dispute wants it ultimately to reach the General Conference. But it will, if people think that this is the only way, bog the process down in terms of someone at the GC always hearing these reports from all over the world feel.

I know in this country every case does not reach the Supreme Court. And so you can imagine, if individuals continue in this huge 13-division church, with churches always wanting their appeal to go to the GC, it would be sometimes unmanageable. I am speaking against the referral.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. Then we move to—

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Mrs. Chair, if you allow me.

ELLA SIMMONS: Yes, Elder Miranda.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Yes, only to add that we have 35 points of order just in one day. If we just allow every situation to go to the General Conference and General Conference session, we're going to need, not 10 days, but perhaps 20 or one month, to discuss these issues.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you for your observation. We have on microphone 4 Doug Batchelor, General Conference.

DOUG BATCHELOR: Madam Chair, I'm standing in support of the motion to refer this back to the *Church Manual* Committee. We heard earlier this week that the General Conference is not covered with a cloud of requests like this. And this motion and the existing language do not take away the right of the General Conference to refuse to hear, but it preserves the rights of the members in the institutions to appeal.

And so I would plea that we vote yes to the referral motion.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you for your comment. Microphone 4, Eugen Hartwich, Inter-European Division.

EUGEN HARTWICH: Mrs. Chair, I also appreciate this move made by Frank Hasel. It's an important one because it makes sure that our basic rights are sustained. The committee presented us a move that was a little bit changed, and now we should vote on this.

The problem is that there is not enough time to consider this important issue, to pray for that, to make sure that we understand what is written, to translate it into different languages. It's such an important move because the issue is about our basic democratic rights, so I would like to refer this back to the *Church Manual* Committee and to deal it in the next session. Thank you very much.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. On microphone 2, Louis Torres, North American Division.

LOUIS TORRES: Thank you, Mrs. Chairman. And I really appreciate the *Church Manual* Committee working on this and trying to make an effort to make changes. The statements that have been made in reference to the General Conference being bogged down, etc., was cleared by Elder Wahlen when he said that there are not many that come up to that level. However, not to accept this motion to refer would limit the General Conference final authority on issues between institutions. This is not from what is written here, dealing with individuals, but rather institutions.

And I strongly encourage the referral, because I believe that the original has served us well and will continue to serve us well for the next five years. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. Microphone 2, Onyebuchi Nwankpa, West-Central Africa Division.

ONYEBUCHI NWANKPA: Thank you, Lady Chair.

I want to observe that five years is a long period to sit on a hot coal. And if we look at the wording of what we are looking at, I want to say that one does not adjudicate on his own case. If I am the highest authority or the highest entity or level but directly involved in a matter or have an interest in the matter, I should not have the final say in that matter.

And so if there is nowhere to handle the issue of changing or wording it right here, I would support that it be referred. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. Microphone 6, Ian Sweeney, Trans-European Division.

IAN SWEENEY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I think that some of the comments are being made as though the appeals are coming from individuals. They are organizations and institutions. I actually think the original would have served us well. I would support the motion to refer back, in support of the original wording.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. We still have several speakers in the queue on this item, and it's growing. This is just for your information.

Microphone 6, Victor Pilmoor.

VICTOR PILMOOR: Madam Chair, we're a nation of 18 million members and many institutions. And it seems to me that we need a differentiation, a separation of judiciary and political leadership. And in referring it back, I would suggest that those in charge consider, as we have separate auditors, a separate strand of judiciary to serve the church. I move to refer.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. On microphone 6 also, Emmanuel Mwale, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

EMMANUEL MWALE: I also support the motion to refer for the reason that, whatever the case may be, we may think that we will decide these matters in the church, but eventually these matters may go to court. And if the intent of the motion as amended is to control, there is a way in which the rules of natural justice deletes controlling of appeals to higher bodies. And I think we have the Office of Legal Counsel here at the GC that can guide us.

There's what is called "leave to appeal," and it's granted at the particular position as the appeals are going forward, so we can control. But the language as it is now is a betrayal to the church system. And if matters go to court, it's possible that the church can be losing substantial amounts of money, because we are actually not following rules of natural justice. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you for your comment.

On microphone 4, David Trim, General Conference.

DAVID TRIM: Thank you, Madam Chair. May I say, I don't think "Mrs. Chair" is quite the proper parliamentary way of addressing you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you.

DAVID TRIM: So, Madam Chair, I seem to be swimming against the tide, but I speak against referring this. It's already been stated that these are not individual rights, so this is not a question threatening our democratic rights.

And equally, the previous speaker referred to the process of giving leave to appeal. This is actually what the proposed amendment is putting in place, because it says the organization has the right to refuse it. So that means it's not going to be summarily dismissed. It will consider it and say, "Is there a

merit to this? If so, we will proceed to a full discussion of it,” but it gives the organization the right to weed out frivolous appeals. So this is actually putting in place what the previous speaker wanted.

Second, we have a process for doing this. It has worked through the process, it’s gone to the *Church Manual* Committee, gone back to it. I think we should trust the process and not leave this, as my brother said, sit on a hot coal for five years. That sounds rather unpleasant to me.

And the third point would be: People have said the wording we have has worked well. As I’ve traveled in my job, I’ve heard from a number of places of situations where it hasn’t worked well. So let’s trust the process. Let’s move forward with something that can hopefully be better, and if it doesn’t, then in five years we can change it

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. Mike 6, Jeremy Zwiker, Trans-European Division.

JEREMY ZWIKER: I’d like to move to call the question.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. The question has been called. And making sure that we follow procedure, it does require a second. I think we see several. There is no debate. And what we are doing is looking to cease debate on the item for referral back to the committee. So the motion to move the previous question is before you.

All in favor, express your approval with the uplifted green card.

All opposed, please give the same sign.

It is carried.

So we will move to the action on the question for referral. That motion was to refer back to the *Church Manual* Committee item 402, which was presented prior.

If we are ready for that, all in favor of referring the action back to the *Church Manual* Committee, please express your approval with the uplifted green card. All right.

All opposed, please give the same sign.

Let us confer just a moment.

OK. We have triangulated our data, and the motion fails.

Now we go to the original motion. If we can see the motion, the item, and then the motion, just to be sure we're all together. Item 402.

OK. We are talking about this item. OK. I was about to begin calling the list, but we have Boyce Mkhize, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, on microphone 6 with a point of order.

BOYCE MKHIZE: Madam Chair, it is in relation to the vote that was just taken. We are not certain as to how the table arrives at the conclusion that the motion was defeated. As far as we could see, some of us, the call was a tight one. And I therefore would propose that a proper count be taken.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. I think your first statement was in regard to how the chair determined the call, and it is your right. We took an independent, quick count, and then we shared our findings. That was what I meant by "triangulating our data here."

Are you challenging that, or did you just want clarification on how we arrived at the decision?

BOYCE MKHIZE: Well, I'm challenging that, Madam Chair. I'm not sure how you arrived at a quick count in less than 30 seconds.

ELLA SIMMONS: It was a visual count, as we have done many times. But I think I understand what you're saying, because it appeared to be close and you doubt our accuracy. Is that a fair statement?

BOYCE MKHIZE: It is fair, Madam Chair. And where there was a fairly close count in the past in this house, there has been a call for a proper counting. And so I'll suggest that a proper counting be taken.

ELLA SIMMONS: We're checking process on this. We're open to doing that. If we can take the call of the chair, we will call for the counters for each division, and we will call for your restatement.

We're checking the legality, because you want us to be careful.

OK. You have appealed, and the chair receives your appeal, and we're calling for the counters in the divisions. Would you please make yourselves known so that we can call for the vote again. Of course, we don't know whether individuals will change their vote, but we will not deal with that at this time.

I'm sorry. I'm just not seeing the counters stand at each of the divisions. Please wave your cards or something so that I know we're ready.

OK. Thank you. I appreciate that.

We need the motion to refer put back on the screen. Thank you. The motion, then, that we are considering in response to the appeal on the call is to refer back to the *Church Manual* Committee the presented amendments that had been before us.

With that, all in favor, please stand. The counters were doing better with that, because you can sit after they have counted you. Now stand and raise your card, please, if you support the motion to refer.

Counters, please follow the process of taking your numbers to Myron Iseminger, please.

Is there a section to my right that does not have a counter? You're still standing with your cards even in the front row? We need counters over to our right.

It appears that all votes for approval have been taken.

Now we call for those who oppose the motion to refer back to the *Church Manual* Committee the item that had been before us. Please stand and hold your cards. Counters, please take the tally for us.

Counters, please continue counting as we recognize a point of order on microphone 4, Gerard Damsteegt. Dr. Damsteegt, please let us hear the nature of your point of order in the event it pertains to the counting process.

GERARD DAMSTEEGT: Sister Chairman, the first vote was first taken in approval to refer it back, and then—

ELLA SIMMONS: No. No. It was defeated. The call was that the motion had been defeated.

GERARD DAMSTEEGT: The process just referred, reversed itself. And so a number of us thought that the first vote was in approval of sending it back, and now not. And so there was a confusion.

ELLA SIMMONS: The motion, as stated, was to refer back to the *Church Manual* Committee the item that was before us. The chair called for a show of green cards of those who approved the motion to refer back, and then the chair called for a show of green cards of those who oppose the motion to refer back.

Our brother appealed the call of defeat from the chair, so, therefore, we went to count. I assume everyone understood that when you stood the first time, it was in favor of the motion that is before you

regarding the referral back. And then we just completed the count, the head count, for those who opposed. I appreciate your contribution, but I think we covered it.

We're waiting for the tally and additional information.

OK. We have a point of order. Microphone 6, Israel Leito, Inter-American Division.

ISRAEL LEITO: Madam Chair, through you, to the parliamentarian, if he would please explain to us the motion division of the question.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you, Elder Leito. Yes, we would like to hear from the parliamentarian.

TODD MC FARLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to assume that Elder Leito meant "division of the house," not "division of the question."

Is that correct? Because—

ISRAEL LEITO: Question, yes.

TODD MC FARLAND: So—

ISRAEL LEITO: Division of—yes.

TODD MC FARLAND: The way it works with the cards is the chair makes the call to his or her best ability. She consulted with me and the secretary, and we all three came to the same decision.

It is the right of the body to appeal that decision and have what's known as a "division of the house." And a "division of the house" means that people stand, have a standing count, and it's actually counted. That obviously takes quite a bit more time, as you're experiencing right now. But it is the right of the body to do that, and the chair took that standing, and that's called a "division of the house."

I hope that's clear.

ISRAEL LEITO: Yes, Mr. Parliamentarian. And that is also the same division of question that, on itself, requires a vote before it can be ruled on.

TODD MC FARLAND: No. The chair has the right to—if you look on the voting on page 5, the chair has the right to call for a division of the house. They can call for the voting however they like.

It would have been possible for the chair to have taken a vote on the appeal, and we would have voted about how to vote. The chair chose not to do that.

ELLA SIMMONS: We believe everyone has had the opportunity to express his or her—I'm sorry. The parliamentarian wants to speak again.

TODD MC FARLAND: Just to be clear, I will point out that on page 5, number 3, it says, "Either the chair or any member may call for the votes to be counted/recounted (a division of the assembly)." And so that was what happened and why we went directly to that.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. We are consulting one more source.

We're looking to be sure everyone has voted. We would like to see the outcome, please.

We didn't have the exact figures, but this is what we thought we saw, and we appreciate the brother who challenged that for accuracy. There's no problem with that.

So the motion to refer has been rejected, and we move then to the main motion.

But we have a point of order. Microphone 3, Jerilyn Burtch, North American Division.

JERILYN BURTCH: Would it be possible to post the rewording to the delegate portal so we could read it more clearly?

ELLA SIMMONS: Yes, of course. When we attempted to return to the main motion, we put the motion up, followed by the wording of the amendment as presented. We will do the same if we're ready to move forward.

All right. Let us look at this again. The motion is—please, the text of the motion—are you prepared?

—to amend the *Church Manual* as presented. And then the body would like to see the presentation of the amendment from the committee. If we can pull that, then we will return to discussion. We have a few individuals in the queue.

Microphone 4, Mainka Holger, Inter-European Division.

MAINKA HOLGER: This discussion is a bit abstract. So just for my understanding, let's take an example. A local church has an issue with a local conference. It can appeal to the union. According to the initial proposal, it can stop there when the union decides. Now with a new proposal, a local church can appeal one level higher to the division. Is that correct?

ARMANDO MIRANDA: That's correct.

MAINKA HOLGER: So we are already in the situation with this proposal that a local church can go to the division. And change the example one level higher. A local conference can, with that proposal, already go directly to the General Conference? Is that correct?

ELLA SIMMONS: Elder Miranda, Elder Wollan.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: It's correct, Madam Chair, the observation.

ELLA SIMMONS: Please let us be clear: In the current wording, not the amendment, what would be the situation? Elder Wollan? Elder Miranda? Under current policy, not the amendment, what would be the situation as presented? For clarity.

HARALD WOLLAN: I didn't get what you said.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: It's difficult to hear from here.

ELLA SIMMONS: Please make this clear to the body. There is a lack of clarity.

I want to hear from the committee regarding current policy, under existing policy, not the amendment, what would be the case in the scenario presented.

HARALD WOLLAN: In the original—as it stands in the *Church Manual* now—an individual or an entity can appeal successively all the way to the General Conference.

ELLA SIMMONS: As it is now?

HARALD WOLLAN: That is how it is now. The proposal here is that we leave it with an entity to which it has been appealed on second level to decide upon whether they want to hear or to act on it and make that final, or forward it onward to the next organization.

ELLA SIMMONS: And that would be the ultimate range of progression under the amended policy? Elder Miranda, Elder Wollan, what would be—OK. They're conferring.

It seems that there is some difficulty in their hearing my voice. If the body will allow me, I'm going to turn to speak to these here. Please.

HARALD WOLLAN: If a church has a disagreement with the conference, the appeal goes onward. The church can appeal to the union. If the union disagrees, they can continue to the next level.

But that level, the division, can determine whether they want to deal with it there or to forward their appeal onward.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. On microphone 4 also, Lesleigh Bower, South Pacific Division.

LESLEIGH BOWER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise to speak in favor of the motion, because it affords the same procedural fairness to aggrieved claimants as would be available to them in a court of law, at least in a common-law jurisdiction where I operate. Even procedural fairness has an end point. And I'm satisfied that the motion affords an end point so that vexatious matters can be dealt with once and for all.

In addition, if I could have the words back up on the screen. Just a minor amendment that might add some clarity to a point previously raised. And that is that the word "involved" be amended to read "that considered the dispute." Perhaps that might add some clarity. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. We then go to microphone 2, Jim Howard, North American Division.

JIM HOWARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. When I read that it states, "If the matter does not get resolved at this level, the aggrieved entity may appeal to successively higher levels of organization." So if I'm a church and I have an issue that I've not resolved with the conference, it almost appears like it stops at the union.

Even if it did not stop at the union but stopped at the division, I work in a wonderful conference, a wonderful union, so I don't see any issues ever occurring. But we cannot totally rule out the possibility that there would be cases in which there are areas of the world where the policies and practices and beliefs of this body that are established at a General Conference session are not followed.

If there was a situation in which the General Conference was being bombarded with difficult, trivial matters, we could have reason for this. But when we met with the *Church Manual* Committee as we discussed this with various individuals, this has never been a problem of multitude of issues being dealt with.

So in light of the fact that there isn't really a major problem in relation to it, I believe I stand in favor of turning down this amendment. And I think it would be just fine if the last sentence was removed. If you removed that sentence, I would stand very much in favor, and I think that last sentence doesn't really help anything in the current church arrangement. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. We have a point of order at microphone 6, Mzanempi Nhlapo, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

MZANEMPI NHLAPO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe a vote has been taken, and it is a vote that has ruled whether or not the amendment should be referred back or not. I see we are taking the vote on review, and we do get a reflection on what has been voted already. I thought the matter was closed when the vote was taken, and therefore the few speeches that have taken place are out of order.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you for that observation. There is a fine line here between the desire to refer back and those speeches that are against the motion, so we're trying to determine. But thank you for that observation.

Microphone 4, Clinton Wahlen, General Conference.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Madam Chair, will you allow me before?

ELLA SIMMONS: I'm sorry.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: It seems to me that the churches and institutions are protected in their right to appeal. If we go to line 25, at the end of the line it says, "If the matter does not get resolved at this level, the aggrieved entity may appeal to successively higher levels of organization." It's not saying "level." It's plural, "levels of organization."

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you for that clarification or that focus.

Microphone 4, Clinton Wahlen, General Conference.

CLINTON WAHLEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I appreciate the work of the *Church Manual* Committee. I was one of those who met with them Wednesday night and one of quite a number who had some confusion and concern about these suggestions for changing the *Church Manual*. And I have to confess I'm still a little confused.

I'm wondering if you could answer a question. And that is, because the title of this is "General Conference the Highest Authority," but the amendment, should it pass, would seem to remove the General Conference Executive Committee or the General Conference session from having the right to review decisions of lower organizations, the division or the union, should that organization consider the appeal not worthy of referral to the next-higher organization. Is that—

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you.

SPEAKER: —a correct interpretation?

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. We can hold that because we have another point of order. Microphone 3, Carlos Moreta, North American Division.

CARLOS MORETA: Please, I don't know if you are computing microphone number 3.

ELLA SIMMONS: Microphone 3.

CARLOS MORETA: Please, microphone 3. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: We are following. And I'm not sure what your point of order is, but there is no problem with the monitor or the microphone.

I'm going to apologize to Dr. Wahlen and ask if you had additional comments because you did have time remaining. Microphone 4.

CLINTON WAHLEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just would like to hear an answer from the *Church Manual* Committee regarding my question. It seems that also the title here is "General Conference the Highest Authority." Should this amendment pass, the General Conference would have no right of review of the decisions of lower entities, the division or the union, if that entity considered their decision satisfactory and it would be fine with them. Is that a correct interpretation?

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you for your question. Elder Miranda? Elder Wollan?

HARALD WOLLAN: Madam Chair, that is not a right understanding. The General Conference is the highest authority. It will always be. The *Church Manual* is written for the local church. And this issue here opens up a venue of how to deal with a dispute, but these disputes will always have to be dealt with in accordance with the *Church Manual* and the *Working Policy* of the church. And there is no question

and no intent of taking away the authority of the General Conference. It will always be the highest authority. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you for that clarification. Microphone 5, Chester Clark, General Conference.

CHESTER CLARK: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the work that the *Church Manual* Committee has been doing. I just had a bit of a question. You know, it seems to me on Tuesday we were assured that this did not remove the right of an individual to appeal to the highest level. And maybe we could just hear an answer of the rationale.

Why would an individual, perhaps even one church member who has crazy ideas, be afforded the right to appeal to the highest level, while a group of members acting as a body would not be afforded that same right? It seems to me that this is an inconsistency in our conception of rights.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. Is there any immediate response before we move on? Elder Miranda?

We have a point of order. Microphone 4, Clinton Wahlen.

CLINTON WAHLEN: Sorry, Madam Chair. I was thinking I still had about 20 seconds left.

ELLA SIMMONS: And I thought I gave you all the time that you had remaining. It was up to you when you finished.

CLINTON WAHLEN: I really don't see any language here that protects the right of the General Conference Executive Committee or the session to review decisions that lower organizations consider final.

Could the secretary please point me to that language here?

ELLA SIMMONS: Since you're looking at specific language, we will come back to that so as not to delay the process more. If that is acceptable to you, you would want the specific language.

CLINTON WAHLEN: No. I assume that it's here already—

ELLA SIMMONS: Yes.

CLINTON WAHLEN: —but I don't see the language that protects the General Conference Executive Committee right of review. I don't see that language in this portion. So—

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you.

CLINTON WAHLEN: —if the secretary—

ELLA SIMMONS: Elder Miranda, or Elder Wollan, if you have something specific to offer at this moment, you may do so. If you need to search the text beyond this point, you should take that time as well.

HARALD WOLLAN: It is not there, and I would beg you not to read into the text something that is not there.

ELLA SIMMONS: Chester Clark, microphone 5.

CHESTER CLARK: Yes. I was just wondering if we had any answer to that question of why we have rights for individuals but not for groups of individuals.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Madam Chair?

ELLA SIMMONS: Yes, Elder Miranda.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: As was explained, the institutions and churches, apart from the *Church Manual*, are ruled, institutions especially, based on the policies of the church. And the policies protect the right of the churches and institutions, even in this case, to make the appeal to the next level of organization.

In this case, we can insist again, it's included, because it says "the aggrieved entity may appeal to successively higher levels of organization." So it's not limited to one or two levels. They can go even to the General Conference session.

HARALD WOLLAN: In addition to that, Madam Chair, I think we probably need to say that the *Working Policy* actually has an outline of how to deal with conflict resolutions with individuals. That is not covered in the *Church Manual*. It hasn't been so far.

ELLA SIMMONS: Point of order, microphone 6, Cecil Perry, Trans-European Division.

CECIL PERRY: Madam Chairman, it's more a question of privilege.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you.

CECIL PERRY: I know that this situation could take us until lunchtime—

ELLA SIMMONS: Beyond.

CECIL PERRY: —and then finally be referred to the Executive Committee. But I think that the motion does suggest not only conflict resolution but also that each level of the organization—

ELLA SIMMONS: Elder Perry, is this point of order for clarification as opposed to speaking for or against the motion?

CECIL PERRY: It's a question of privilege for clarification.

ELLA SIMMONS: A question?

CECIL PERRY: Of privilege.

ELLA SIMMONS: I'm not sure that that's listed there. I need to confer.

That is not listed among our possibilities for question of privilege in the *General Conference Rules of Order*. Perhaps we can come back. And I can ask the parliamentarian to share those with us, if we need that clarification.

TODD MC FARLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Just to refer, the questions of privileges, which are on page 6, 2(c): "Questions of privilege refer to organization of the session or meeting, comfort of the delegates or members, or conduct of delegates, members, or of others present."

Being confused about what is going on in the proceedings is not a question of privilege. It is a substance, and so one would need to be scanned in and so forth. It is not a question of privilege that one is not understanding.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. We have quite a queue here. Microphone 6, Emmanuel Mwale, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

EMMANUEL MWALE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I did mention when I stood first that the problem is with the language that is used. It appears that the institutions are given room to appeal; at the same time, they are denied the right to appeal. When I said there's language that can be used to

control and I referred to leave to appeal, that presupposes that a body has heard the appeal but feels that there are not grounds for further appeal. That's when leave to appeal is granted.

Now, the situation here, according to what is written there—let's assume that there are differences between local churches, and they appeal to the conference. The conference will determine the matter. And if the conference feels that there are no more grounds for further appeal, the conference may not give leave to appeal. But the way it is here, it's like if a local church or churches appeal to the conference, the conference will look at it and decide that they will not hear the appeal.

I think this is where the confusion is.

I understand that the church is not a public body. I also understand that we are dealing with institutional rights and not individual rights. However, the language is a bit confusing. I also support the idea of controlling appeals where grounds are not really grounds for which an institution should appeal.

But the language doesn't seem to be clear, and that's why there's a confusion. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. We go to microphone 3, Marc Woodson, North American Division.

MARC WOODSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I really appreciate the work that our *Church Manual* Committee has done on this. They have spent quite a lot of time. There are a lot of issues that go into why changes are made to the *Church Manual*. And so respecting the work that they have done, I would like to move the previous question.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. Then we would need support. I do see support here. This is not debatable. Are we prepared to take action on the motion for previous question, which means to cease debate? Yes.

OK. It appears that the body is ready.

All in favor, please uplift your green card. Lift up your green card. OK. That was to approve the cessation of debate.

All opposed, please express your desire by the same sign. OK.

We go to the original motion. That is carried. The motion is—and it will appear before us in just a moment. I think they're working on getting the original motion.

“To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 3, as presented.” And as we did before, you may want to also display that item, the presentation of the amendment. They're working on it. That has to go back and forth a few times before they can display.

You see this. Because there was a call for greater clarity previously on a point of order, we want to be sure that we understand where we are.

Then the motion to approve to amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 3, as presented, all in favor, please raise your green card.

OK. Thank you.

All opposed to this motion, raise your green cards.

Thank you. The motion is carried. It is clear. Thank you.

We trust that the process is allowing for sufficient discussion and not becoming bogged down.

So you will have to signal your readiness to move for decisions.

Elder Miranda, will we please give us the next item.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: The next item has to do with the use of a term that we just decided in 2010. On page 20 of the current *Church Manual* it says the use—one of the terms we are using in the Church Manual is “pastor” and “minister.”

ELLA SIMMONS: Elder Miranda. I'm sorry. Please give us the number of this item so that everyone is together. You gave the page number, I believe, page 20. The number of the item, the agenda item.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: We have a problem to hear from here.

ELLA SIMMONS: I understand. The agenda item number.

HARALD WOLLAN: The agenda item number is 403. It's page 93.

ELLA SIMMONS: 403, page 93. Thank you.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: In this case, as I was saying, is the use of term “pastor” or “minister.” And on page 21 of the current *Church Manual* it says that “pastors referred to in this manual are those who have been appointed by the conference to oversee the affairs of the local church or district.”

In this item, we are not dealing with the issue of ministerial credentials or ministerial licenses. We are only adjusting the use of the word “pastors” in the *Church Manual* to be consistent with the other areas of the *Church Manual* where we are just using the term “pastor.” So we are not changing and saying that we are suggesting or saying that the credentials, instead of licensed minister, license, instead of being ministerial license, now they’re going to be licensed ministerial pastors, licensed pastors.

So we are only aligning the term. It is the only section in the *Church Manual* where we still maintain the word “ministers” in referring to the local church pastor who is working at that level. So it’s adjusting the term.

ELLA SIMMONS: Is there a motion?

ARMANDO MIRANDA: I move we accept this suggestion.

AGUSTIN GALICIA: Second.

ELLA SIMMONS: We have the motion with support before us. It will be on the screen. Here we are. To amend the *Church Manual* in Chapter 4 as presented, and the presentation is before you.

We have two speakers on the queue. We will go to microphone 4, Kathryn Profitt, General Conference.

KATHRYN PROFITT: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Since we are talking about ministry, I would like to again state that I and, I believe, many of my brothers and sisters believe that God has given women a special calling to minister.

And in light of our vote on Wednesday, I respectfully request the General Conference consider appointing a commission or some other instrument, as they may choose, to develop guidelines or policies for women in ministry based on Scripture.

Madam, this is not a motion; this is a request for referral.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. We have received your request.

Now on microphone 4 also, Mainka Holger, Inter-European Division.

MAINKA HOLGER: I would like to raise the previous question.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. Is there support? Yes, there is. All right. We have no debate on this. So please get ready for the motion to move the previous question.

All in favor of ceasing debate, moving the previous question, please raise your green card the previous question.

All opposed, please give the same sign.

It's carried. We cease debate on this item and go to the original motion. We will see that on the screen in a moment.

The motion is to amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 4, as presented. I believe we are ready.

All in favor, express approval of the motion by raising your green card. Thank you.

All opposed, please give the same sign.

The motion is carried. Thank you.

We move to the next item.

HARALD WOLLAN: I think we will go to an issue that we dealt with regarding the church board and its meetings. So item 422, page 123.

There were some questions raised that brought this back to the committee. One of the objections that was mentioned was that they felt that evangelism was moved further down on the priority list of the *Church Manual*. This was not the intention of the *Church Manual* Committee, because it was looked upon that the active discipleship plan involves outreach and evangelism. But in order to accommodate this, we have adjusted the numbering on page 124 so we maintain the first item, "an active discipleship plan," on line 18, but we have moved evangelism up to number 2 on line 20.

The next change that we are suggesting is on line 22. Where it said, "Spiritual nurture," we have actually corrected the language so it's "nurturing and mentoring of members."

The next small change is on line 40, where it originally said "involve every member." But, as you see the text, the proper way to write it would be—and I read the whole sentence beginning at middle of

line 39: “When the board devotes its first interests and highest energies to involving.” So we have changed it to “involving every member in proclaiming the gospel news and making disciples.”

ELLA SIMMONS: Is there a motion?

AGUSTIN GALICIA: Seconded.

HARALD WOLLAN: No. It will—

ELLA SIMMONS: Still continue?

HARALD WOLLAN: —be the whole document.

The next page, 125, on line 36, you will remember that in our discussion on that day, the question was Is there a mixture or discrepancy regarding the use of “leader” and “director”? And it is clarified that when it comes to Adventurer Club and Pathfinder Club, we are talking about director, but the rest of the leaders are actually to be named “leaders.”

So on line 36, the new suggestion reads “Ambassador Club leader.”

Then on line 42, we have added “church school principal or head teacher,” so the sentence on line 42 reads, “Education secretary/church school principal or head teacher.”

Then on the next page, 136, line 4, instead of “leader” you have “Pathfinder Club director,” according to my explanation earlier on.

Then just putting in the capital “C” and “M” in “Public Campus Ministries” on line 6.

Going down to line 30, we have inserted the word “local,” because it seemed to be misunderstood by some and we wanted to clarify. So it reads, “Train local church leadership in how to encourage intentional spiritual growth in themselves and others.”

Then the next page, 127, we go to line 12. We have put in “laypersons” instead of “layperson” because it was felt in our discussion the other day that more than one should be involved in this, so we have taken care of that.

Then we have added line 23, number 10, it says, “Promote Adventist education.”

And with these additional changes, I move the whole document as now presented.

AGUSTIN GALICIA: Seconded.

ELLA SIMMONS: We have the motion and support. If you are making—I see you waving your cards that you're ready to vote, but if you're making your way to a microphone, just be sure that we see you.

We have microphone 6, Bangwato Sikwa, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

BANGWATO SIKWA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Mine is really to seek for clarification. What is the difference between leader, director, and coordinator? Because this motion seems to be seeking to change some of the offices to be called leaders, while others are called directors. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: As I recall, the extended conversation in regard to use of terminology directed the committee back to find a more general term that is more inclusive.

Elder Miranda?

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Just to add, we discussed this issue. We received the feedback the General Conference Youth Ministries director. And he said it's more a tradition to use "director" in the case of Pathfinders and Adventurers and "leaders" in the areas of Ambassadors and youth society.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. We go to microphone 6, Delight Ngwira, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

DELIGHT NGWIRA: Thank you, Sister Chairperson.

In that amendment I would like to specifically talk to line 2, page 125, which talks about spiritual nurture. The second sentence there reads as if we have, apart from the Bible, other points of reference for love. But just to make sure that the love we are talking about here is Bible-based, the sentence that reads, "True discipleship entails not only biblical teaching, but also a passionate commitment," and so on.

I would like to move that that sentence should read, "True discipleship entails," delete the words "not only," so it reads, "True discipleship entails biblical teachings of the mission and passionate commitment to loving fellow believers unconditionally." Then referencing Matthew 28:20, and including 1 John 4:20.

Sister Chairperson, I move that motion.

ELLA SIMMONS: I'm sorry. You were suggesting some language. And I'm going to receive your comments as that, but we'll check the transcript. I did not hear a motion at the beginning.

OK. I thought I heard you make a suggestion early on in your statement, but we're going to go with the recording secretary's notes.

Later on, you did mention the motion to amend—that is what we're understanding. Would you like to state that clearly for us?

DELIGHT NGWIRA: Yes. I would like to suggest an adjustment in that sentence.

ELLA SIMMONS: We want to be sure that we have captured this, and then I will restate.

HARALD WOLLAN: Could you tell us page and line, please?

DELIGHT NGWIRA: Page 125, line 2.

ELLA SIMMONS: Your motion to amend is? Brother?

DELIGHT NGWIRA: The sentence is to read, "True discipleship entails biblical teachings of the mission and passionate commitment to loving fellow believers unconditionally," referencing Matthew 28:20, as already amended, but also adding 1 John 4:20.

ELLA SIMMONS: Without restating all of this, if you would allow me to get away with that, your motion to amend the presented statement would make it read, "True discipleship entails"—

I have a point of order on microphone 3, Roscoe Howard, North American Division.

ROSCOE HOWARD: Yes, Madam Chairman.

I'm concerned. Are we amending documents from the floor now, or do we refer them back to the committee with proper suggestions of wording?

ELLA SIMMONS: We're not amending on the floor, but he has a motion for amendment, and we are clarifying the brother's intent and offering.

ROSCOE HOWARD: But that's my concern.

ELLA SIMMONS: Yes.

ROSCOE HOWARD: Do we take his amendment? I don't—

ELLA SIMMONS: We are not rewriting the document on the floor. He can move to amend, and then we'll deal with it after that.

Let me see here. And I understand. I understand the point.

The motion to amend would be to change the language, "True discipleship entails," delete the words "not only," so that it reads "True discipleship entails biblical teachings of the mission and passionate commitment to loving fellow believers unconditionally," and then the scriptural references.

We think it's ready to go to the screen. And since we are not amending the document on the floor, were you moving this to go back to the committee? Several have made suggestions about language, but most have not made the motion to refer back.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Madam Chair, perhaps it will help if the secretary of the *Church Manual* Committee make a clarification in that paragraph, if you allow us.

ELLA SIMMONS: After I hear from the speaker regarding his intent, if you are ready to offer clarifying points, please do so.

DELIGHT NGWIRA: Yes, I'm ready to refer it back to the committee.

ELLA SIMMONS: So what, then, is actually your motion? Is it to refer the original motion back to the committee, or were you making a suggestion on the language?

DELIGHT NGWIRA: Sister Chair, be my guide. My motion is to—

ELLA SIMMONS: To refer back to committee to achieve the adjustment—

DELIGHT NGWIRA: Yes.

ELLA SIMMONS: —that you have suggested?

DELIGHT NGWIRA: Yes.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. Then if you are referring back, we want you to be sure to follow process. And referring back, we're going to have to—

We're waiting for some indication on the queue.

I was inquiring here if there was support for this motion to refer back. Is there a second somewhere? OK. We do see the support. All right.

Are there questions or comment regarding the motion to refer this item back to the committee? If not, we will go immediately to the decision on that. I'm seeing none.

All right. All in favor of referring this item back to the *Church Manual* Committee, please express by uplifting your green card.

OK. All opposed, would you give the same sign?

All right. The motion to refer the item back is defeated, so we will return to discussion on the original motion.

And we're going to go to microphone 4, Gilbert Cangy, General Conference.

GILBERT CANGY: Madam Chair, I will intervene here only if there is a need for further clarification on the distinction or differentiation between "leader" and "director" when it pertains to youth ministry, but let me clarify anyway.

Generally speaking, individuals who are in leadership for youth ministry at the local church carry the designation of "leader," hence Ambassador leader, Young Adults leader, as we used to have AY leader.

There is an exception for two entities that function as clubs. Traditionally we have used the word "director" for Adventurer director and Pathfinder director. It's on their patches. It's in the manual, and I believe that we should maintain this tradition and recognize that this is an exception to the rule. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. Then we will go to microphone 2, Lee-Roy Chacon, North American Division.

LEE-ROY CHACON: Madam Chair, I move the previous question.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. Is there support? All right. We will not debate. We will go directly to an expression of our desire on that. OK.

If you are in favor of the motion to move the previous question—that is, to cease debate—please express this with the uplifted green card.

If you are opposed, please do so with the same sign.

The motion carries. We will go to the main motion and to the question.

Are we ready? OK.

The motion is to amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, as presented. All in favor, express such by raising your green card. Thank you.

All opposed, with the same sign.

Thank you. It is carried. We could possibly get another item in. Elder Miranda, Elder Wollan.

HARALD WOLLAN: Thank you. The item we will deal with now is number 418 of the agenda on page 111.

We're dealing with youth ministries. There were several things that were talked about as it was referred back. We have looked at the various issues. There are some editorial recommendations that are done without changing any of the meanings, like on page 111, on line 17, "towards"—it probably should be "towards the development of strong youth ministries."

Then if we go onward to page 113, we have included as requested from the floor "ministries," and that is actually a correct term, Young Adults Ministries Committee, on line 18.

Then we have made a correction about "public colleges and universities."

So on line 39: ". . . developing an intentional ministry with the purpose of caring for the special needs of college and university institutions not operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

The reason we have written—

ELLA SIMMONS: Elder Wollan, before you go into your explanation, we need to take a point of order on microphone 3 from Marc Woodson of the North American Division.

MARC WOODSON: Madam Chair, I hate to admit that I'm getting older, but it's really hard for us to read the script that's on the screen. If we can just have that a little bit larger for us. I've also checked with those in my delegation are getting older as well. They can't read it as well. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: So we're all suffering from the same ailment here, on this side of the screen and the other.

Those who are operating the equipment will give it their best try. There are some limitations, but we will try.

Thank you.

Elder Wollan, please continue.

HARALD WOLLAN: We continue with “caring for the special needs of colleges.” The way it is written here, we feel that it covers also private institutions, not only public.

So with these amendments as they’re presented to you now, I move acceptance of the document.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. Is there support? Yes, we see there’s a second.

So the motion before us is to amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, as presented.

If you are moving to a microphone for comment, please make yourself known, but there are a few in the queue.

And we have microphone 6, Henry Kanchanda, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

HENRY KANCHANDA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Mine is a point of qualification.

ELLA SIMMONS: Yes.

HENRY KANCHANDA: On page 111, line 33, there is an age group there for young adults, which is 22 to 30-plus. I would like to have the rationale for putting the number 30 there, because I think it would be better expressed by 22 and above.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: I would like to ask Madam Chair—

ELLA SIMMONS: We go to Jiwan Moon, microphone 5. Jiwan Moon, if you’re still there.

JIWAN MOON: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is an exciting time for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, that we have another young person who will be represented at the local church. I wanted to thank you for that decision.

And now I’m speaking in support of the motion that is on the floor to amend the *Church Manual* with the additions, especially the Public Campus Ministries. I’ve been hearing and following closely on social media trying to listen to our young people, and they want our church to listen to them. And I believe this is an opportunity. Some of our brightest young people that we have to offer as a church will

be given a chance to speak in their local churches and become leaders of their churches, and eventually they will be represented in a place like this, where world decisions are made.

So I wanted to personally express my appreciation to the committee for coming out with this amendment. And I'm in full support of this recommendation, and I thank once again to the church family for your support of our young people. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. And just before going to Elder Miranda for a point that he wishes to make or taking the next speaker, I do want to apologize to those who are having difficulty deciphering the text. This was a request earlier in the week, and there was an attempt to further enlarge the text. It failed then and now.

This is the largest that we can get on the screen, we are told. And so we apologize for that, and we'll have to add this to our list of tasks to which we must attend for the next GC session, if Jesus doesn't come first.

So we will try to repeat or to read for you, if necessary, if there's something that you really cannot make out. Thank you.

Elder Miranda, you wanted to make a comment. And if we're able to do so within the time left, we're going to go to microphone 2, with Andrew Smith from the North American Division, and then microphone 4, with David Trim from the General Conference.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Thank you, Madam Chair. There was a question of clarification. And I'd like to ask Gilbert Cangy, the general youth director, to make a clarification. It's regarding the age of young adults from 22 to 30-plus.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you, Elder Miranda. Gilbert Cangy, microphone 4.

GILBERT CANGY: Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to clarify. As I understand, 10 years ago a new level of youth ministry was embraced by the church: Ambassadors, which would cover the ages from 16 to 21. Previous to that, we had the whole senior youth covered under the age group 16 to 30. We used to have 35, but we cut it down to 30-plus. Really, technically our ministry is limited to 30.

However, there are some who have invested so much in senior youth ministry that they're wishing the desire to linger on and still be involved, as they are still young at heart.

We should put a full stop at 30, but the legal "plus" is an accommodation for the young-at-hearts who are beyond 30 years of age.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. Thank you. We will go on to microphone 2, Andrew Smith, from the North American Division.

ANDREW SMITH: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Just to bring to your attention what appears to be a redundancy in a particular paragraph. On page 114, lines 33, 34, 35, and 36, and it's also repeated on page 115, lines 8, 9, and 10, and then again on page 116, lines 15, 16, 17, and 18.

The chair might want to take a look at that.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. We're going to David Trim, General Conference, microphone 4.

DAVID TRIM: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the tweaks that have been made to this. On page 113, line 39, to which I specifically referred, I think this is getting closer. Just a minor change I would suggest that I think could probably be taken by common consent if Elder Miranda and Elder Wollan accept.

At the moment, the new reading refers to the needs the college and university institutions. I don't think that's quite what we mean. We mean students of the institutions, not the institutions themselves. So the slight change I would prepare to the two elders is that it be the needs of college and university students in institutions. If we can just add the "students in," then I think it clarifies what we actually mean.

ELLA SIMMONS: We're going to microphone 6, Istrahel Schorea, Trans-European Division.

ISTRAHEL SCHOREA: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have a clarification. On page 114 I see Adventurer Club and Pathfinder Club. If I'm not mistaken, it missed Master Guide. In some countries it is a program, in other countries it is a club, but I don't see it anywhere in the *Church Manual*. Is there a reason for that?

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. We're going to go to Gilbert Cangy, the director. Yes, please. Microphone 4. Please, just a quick response.

GILBERT CANGY: Madam Chair, thank you. And I am wondering whether there's a quick response to this one.

ELLA SIMMONS: Then maybe we cannot take it.

GILBERT CANGY: But I will simply ask the floor to pay careful attention to what I am about to say without too much exploration. I realize that Master Guide is a very vital part of youth ministry. It is actually the main training platform for leaders who are going to reinvest in leadership for Adventurers and Pathfinders, which is a core ministry within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

There is a distinction between levels of youth ministry, like Adventurers, Pathfinders, Ambassadors, Young Adults, Public Campus Ministry—there's a distinction between those ministries and Master Guide. Master Guide is not a level of youth ministry. Master Guide is a leadership development scheme to equip individuals to invest in leadership for Adventurers and Pathfinders.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. Thank you. That takes care of it. It's clear. Thank you very much. Microphone 4, William Fagal, General Conference.

WILLIAM FAGAL: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I am in support of the changes that we're suggesting here. I only wish to make sure that we have covered the bases that we intended to.

On page 113 we have inserted the word "Ministries" into "Young Adults Committee" on line 18 and perhaps some other places. I wanted to make sure that that might have been the intent as well on lines 22 and 27. I don't remember hearing that. And so if that was the intent, I would hope that by common consent we could include that change there.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much.

HARALD WOLLAN: He's correct.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. That's what we need to hear. My brothers and sisters, we have two individuals left in the queue, and we have exhausted our time. Technically, I should call the end of proceedings for the morning. If you would like to extend the time, we can go to 12:30 and perhaps, with your agreement, could complete the slate of items. But we certainly could complete this one.

Is there an expression of your desire to do so, or so—I see one waving in the back to extend.

We're going to put before you an extension of the session to 12:30. Is there support for that?

We're just going to call for your expression.

All in favor, please express such by raising your green cards.

All opposed, please raise your green cards.

It appears that we will close the session at this moment without completing this item or going to the others.

We do have someone who is prepared with the benediction. And we want to thank you for your participation this morning, for your interest in the work of the church, for your personal commitment to participating in guiding the decisions of the church. The chair has experienced your cooperation, and I thank you for that.

Please rise for the benediction.

COLLEEN ZIMBEVA: Shall we bow our heads in prayer.

[Prayer.]

[End of session.]