

NINTH BUSINESS MEETING

Sixtieth General Conference session, July 7, 2015, 9:25 a.m.

ELLA SIMMONS: Please let us begin to take our seats. We're enjoying the fellowship. We have enjoyed a wonderful musical interlude.

I call to order the morning business session. You will want to get into position so that you can receive several very important announcements.

Again, good morning. I am Ella Simmons, your platform chairperson for the business session this morning. And, of course, you have come to recognize and appreciate the gentleman to my right, your left, Todd McFarland, our parliamentarian for the General Conference session.

To my left and your right is John Thomas, of Secretariat, who is the secretary for this session. And beyond John, to our far left, is Tammy Boward. And you have come to know and appreciate her as well.

We have just about come together in readiness for the business.

Let me share some important announcements with you, please. This one may seem insignificant, but it is of grave importance to us. The chairs here on this field-level floor are to remain in the original configuration as they have been set. This is imperative for our compliance with the fire code. We want to continue the fellowship and the very pleasant business atmosphere inside the building. In order to do that, we have to abide by the fire code rules.

Second, we understand that there can be needs, so room can be made in your sections for wheelchairs by removing one of the seats, one of the chairs, perhaps on the end of a row.

Third, we have seen many moving around on those very cute but very important scooters for those who are having difficulty moving from one place to another on foot. But, again, it is important that you park the scooters in the right place. These scooters are to be parked in the tunnel. Please assist with that.

And then, finally, particularly for those of you who are in the first sections here, tomorrow there will be additional media personnel here with us. They will be up front. We recognize that this will be somewhat of an inconvenience for you, but please bear with them and with all of us as they take care of the business of the session.

Thank you so much for that.

And thank you for your readiness to move into the session. We will begin with prayer and music, and then we will come back to our order of business.

Would you please stand and bow your heads with me?

[Prayer.]

Thank you for that beautiful reminder of why we are here and do what we do. Jesus is coming again, and we have a world to tell.

As we move into the order of business for the morning, I'm sure you are aware that we will be continuing our deliberations and work on the fundamental beliefs. All have been approved except four.

At this time I will call Artur Stele and his team, Ángel Rodríguez and Bill Knott, to join us. And I want to remind you on the rules of participation on which we agreed yesterday and observed during the session. First, there is a two-minute limit on individual contributions from the floor, and we added an additional minute, totaling a three-minute limit on contributions from the floor, when translations are needed.

And then, of course, we will follow the standard rule of order for repeat visits to the microphone; that is, if no one is in the queue, no one else wishes to speak, and you have additional comments to share, of course, the mike can still be open for that.

And I want to thank Secretariat and the entire team for making the documents available to us on the screen this morning.

My sister, we have not forgotten. We will do our best to keep the documents before you, with some with strikeouts so that you can see as we move along, and then particularly on one, we will have a clean copy for you.

However, please be patient with our team. Remember that this is not quite exactly like pulling up a document on the computer. Each item will have to go through several screenings before getting back to the one who then will push the button on the computer.

So we will proceed in that manner. And I notice that although we have not placed anything before you, I see the names of two who have come to the microphones, microphone 6 and microphone 2.

The chair will test the nature of your contributions, but please be reminded that we will not engage in any discussion on any item until we receive the report from Dr. Stele and his team.

So, with that, we will call—I believe it is Berit Elkjaer at microphone number 6. There you are, Berit, from the Trans-European Division. What is the nature of your contribution at this point?

BERIT ELKJAER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Would you allow me to come with a general comment about the fundamental beliefs? It is about that. First of all, I want to say that I appreciate the work of the committee working with our fundamental beliefs. It is, though, my experience that our new Adventists and our young people in the church have a huge difficulty relating to our fundamental beliefs in the present form.

One reason could be that we are dealing with fundamental beliefs written 35 years ago. In the meantime, we have received several new translations of the Bible.

I move that we set up a committee to rewrite our fundamental beliefs in a modern language. Don't misunderstand me. I believe every word of them. But our wonderful message is not shining clear, for example, about health. Could the General Conference set up a committee working for the next five years, a committee of experts in theology but also experts in communication and even some of our young people who are going to lead the church in the next generation.

My motion is that we set up a committee not to just change a word here and there, but to work through the fundamental beliefs and rewrite them in a modern language and maybe even shorten them.

Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you so much, my sister. What you have put before us this morning is probably something that may be on the hearts of many of us. I appreciate the way you have offered this,

and I think intuitively you have anticipated that we would take this motion to the Steering Committee. But I would also ask Dr. Stele to share with you, just for information, something that is in the making that might be helpful.

ARTUR STELE: Yes, Madam Chair. The Statement of Fundamental Beliefs is written, really, in such a way that would, in a short way, really present what we believe. It might not be the best evangelistic tool. And so we hope that, based on these short statements, we will develop literature, materials that will be understandable for our young people and for the secular people as well.

And also I would like to mention that we intend, after these statements are accepted, to work on a book that would really present them in a language that is understandable for the younger generation.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you, Dr. Stele. We have made note of this information and this request, and it will go to Steering Committee.

Now at microphone 2, we have Larry Boggess from the North American Division.

LARRY BOGGESS: I would just like to make an observation as we begin this session. It seems that we have a General Conference session so that we can hear from the body. I have no agenda; I honor the leaders of our church—but it seems to me that many times we have good, authoritative people making suggestions on how to move forward with the fundamental beliefs and with the *Church Manual*. And I get a sense that we're not being heard because the leaders evidently want only what is written, and we are not being heard when it comes to good, reliable suggestions by those who know.

And so I would like to beg, if I may, Madam Chair, that as these items are presented we listen to the body, because I think that's what we're here for, to give guidance as we move on these various agenda items. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you, my brother. I think we understand. Please understand as well that the time limits were set in order to provide the widest possible range of input, and then there would be opportunities for continuation. And, of course, we understand that sometimes there are technical reports that can be helpful. But we all feel that what we have to bring fits that category, I suppose. So we will work on this. We hear your wisdom.

Now, we do have a point of order before we can begin the report. Point of order at microphone 6. Victor Pilmoor from the Trans-European Division. Would you share with us, please, and let's see where we go.

VICTOR PILMOOR: Madam Chair, I'm grateful for your response, and it's in harmony with the comment just made. But the prior comment from my colleague here was a motion, and there was no request for a second.

ELLA SIMMONS: You're absolutely right. The chair made a determination that we would take that motion to the Steering Committee. You will hear it and see it again at an appropriate time. And I appreciate your follow-up to assist me with that. Thank you, my brother.

I believe I see Larry Boggess again. We're going to take one more comment, and we really do need to get into some business this morning, because now we're coming back. Yes.

LARRY BOGGESS: Madam Chair?

ELLA SIMMONS: Yes. At microphone 2.

LARRY BOGGESS: Thank you very much. My concern was not so much the time, but the input to help make sentences better or paragraphs better.

ELLA SIMMONS: Understood. Thank you so much.

ELLA SIMMONS: All right. With this, we will move to the report from the small committee. We have four items to consider this morning. We have discussed these at length, but we want to allow the time this morning for a fuller discussion of each one of these items. We will take them individually. I believe we have items 1, 6, 8, and 24. I may stand to be corrected on one of those. But, as we learned yesterday, Dr. Stele has his own order in which to present these.

So with that, I want to turn the time over to Artur Stele. Please give us a thorough report on your process, again indicating the depth of your consideration of the input that has been received from the floor. And then, of course, share with us the outcomes from your process. And we will then begin the conversations afresh.

Thank you, Dr. Stele.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yesterday additional work was requested. We have worked hard, and we are ready to present some of the results of that labor.

As you have mentioned, four fundamental beliefs were referred back: numbers 1, 6, 8, and 24. I would like to start with the easier ones so that we will have more time with the more difficult ones.

So let's start with fundamental belief 24. A suggestion was made yesterday that we replace one word that appears twice in the context of the typology. We said that the earthly and the heavenly sanctuary are related in the typology arrangement here, and we used for that the word "symbolized." There was a suggestion for us to rethink it, and it may be better to use the word "typified" instead.

We have studied it, we have looked in the writings of Ellen G. White (how she is using it), we have used all other possible literature that was available, and we came to the conclusion that the suggestion is really good and it will make the intent clearer.

And so we move to adopt the suggestion and to replace the word "symbolized" with the word "typified."

I move it.

ELLA SIMMONS: We have the motion to replace the word "symbolized" with the word "typified" in belief 24. And we do have a second on that motion.

Are there comments, or would the floor indicate a readiness to move to the action on the question?

And if you're coming to the microphone, just to assist us, would you please wave your card? That seemed to work yesterday afternoon. We see no one at the microphones. OK. Left side. We don't have a name just yet. I see someone moving and waving. All right. We will give you time to get there.

Please register first, if you have not, so that we can have the information. All right.

Oh. Ray Roennfeldt, microphone 3, from the South Pacific Division.

RAY ROENNFELDT: Good morning, Chair. Thank you for this opportunity. I don't have much to say on this except to back up what one of the delegates said before in terms of language.

ELLA SIMMONS: Yes.

RAY ROENNFELDT: I would remind the delegates that the word “typified” is not used commonly in the English language these days, whereas “symbolized” is used. So I would recommend we stay with the wording as it’s been presented to us.

ELLA SIMMONS: So you’ve risen to speak against the motion?

RAY ROENNFELDT: Yes, I would. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Are there other comments? I see someone waving a card heading to microphone 5, hopefully having dutifully registered at the station. You see the motion on the screen.

Lawrence Tanabose, microphone 5, here as a General Conference representative at the moment, but from the South Pacific Division.

LAWRENCE TANABOSE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I come from a country where English is not the first language. And I would like to support the previous spokesperson. “Typified” is something that does not go well with some of our common languages down in the south. And it’s far better to leave it with the word “symbolized,” because that carries wider connotations, and it gives a clear picture to those of us who do not have English as our first language.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.

I see no other indications of desire for comment. I see someone moving and waving the green card. That is so helpful. Thank you. And he is registering. OK. Someone has already come to microphone 2, Brother Ram from the Southern Asia Division.

BHAJU RAM SHRESTHA: I prefer to use “typified” because of what it is in the context of antitype and type. “Typified” should be a proper use to understand our document. “Symbolized” is a very broad term, but “typified” is specific. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you, brother. At microphone 6 there are three speakers. We will begin with Reinaldo Siqueira from the South American Division.

REINALDO SIQUEIRA: Madam Chair, I would like to support the use of the word “typified.” The fundamental beliefs have a specific purpose for the church, which is to maintain our theology and the

clarity of our beliefs. So I think that beyond the question to be broad and understandable, we need to have a very correct theology.

And after that we can have it being translated. This is a tool for the church, really, to express its beliefs and the correct form.

So I think “typified” is more correct theologically. We should have it. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you for your contribution.

Also at microphone 6, Victor Pilmoor, Trans-European Division.

VICTOR PILMOOR: Madam Chairman, I’m in favor of clear English. It is my favored language.

Could I offer the word “represented,” which is not theologically loaded, as is “symbolized” and “typified”?

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you for your offering. If there is any response from Dr. Stele, we can hear that now.

ARTUR STELE: Well, we considered this word also, and finally we decided, since it came from the floor, to respect it.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. Still at microphone 6. Istrahel Schorea. I’m having difficulty seeing, so please feel free to correct my pronunciation if I am not seeing your name clearly or if I just don’t know how to pronounce it.

ISTRAHEL SCHOREA: No problem, Madam Chair. It’s Israel Schorea.

ELLA SIMMONS: Schorea. Thank you very much. Trans-European Division.

ISTRAHEL SCHOREA: Yes. I can understand that the word “typified” perhaps gives a better meaning. But for us from the Netherlands, English is not our first language, and if we have to translate this word, it may be a problem. And maybe other countries will be dealing with the same problem, so we want to stay with the word “symbolized.”

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. Again at microphone 6, I believe we have Brother Hibner. Am I correct?

BERTOLD HIBNER: Madam Chair, thank you. I would like to ask about translation. If we were to translate the fundamental beliefs into another language, and had difficulty finding the exact word, how much liberty would we have to adopt another word in that other language?

Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. I don't know that we have to fully satisfy your request at this moment. But typically we have processes by which we assure the closest alignment with the original language. And we will go to Dr. Stele for a response as well.

ARTUR STELE: The intent of the fundamental beliefs is to present them in the English language as clearly as possible as far as ideology is concerned. And then every other language really needs to do the best that is possible to present the intended meaning.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you.

ARTUR STELE: It will not be easy, but if we don't present a clear understanding in the original, it will then end up somewhere else in a different translation.

ELLA SIMMONS: And may I make this observation: The items are presented in English, but we do recognize that there are other forms of English than American English and that individual terms have different meanings in different versions of English. That, too, I'm sure, can be recognized.

Our list is growing. We go quickly to microphone 3, Stefan Giuliani from the Inter-European Division.

STEFAN GIULIANI: Madam Chair, the comments seem a bit redundant to me, and so I move the previous question.

ELLA SIMMONS: A call for previous question on the motion. May I remind you that the motion is on the entire statement of fundamental belief 24. We want to be clear on the motion.

Is there support? Is there a second for the motion? There is support.

You understand what we're considering here.

For clarity, I'm reminding that we're voting to cease debate. Is there still support? Yes. All right. Thank you. We will use the green cards.

All in favor of the motion to cease debate, please raise your green card.

Those opposed, the same sign, please.

Thank you. It is carried.

And now, to be clear again on the motion, we're not voting on the individual word, but rather on the entire statement of fundamental belief 24 with the change as revised that was shown on the screen.

OK. We have that motion on the floor, and we have the support. We have ceased debate, so we call for the action.

All in favor of—

OK. We're going to wait for it to come back to the screen. It was there earlier. OK. All right.

All in favor of the motion, please express your favor by raising the green card.

All opposed, please use the same sign of raising your green cards.

Thank you. It is carried. We've approved fundamental belief 24.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you, Madam Chair. We will now go to fundamental belief 8, "The Great Controversy." And there was a suggestion yesterday to replace the word "worldwide flood" with "global flood." We double-checked with the assignments that we had to bring into harmony the statement about Creation with the document Affirmation of Creation. And in the document there the word "global flood" is used, so it is according to the intent.

And so I would like, with this change, to move this whole fundamental belief 8. I move it.

ELLA SIMMONS: We have the motion to approve fundamental belief 8 as presented before you on the screen, and we have support with a second.

We have, on microphone 6, Megan Mole, Trans-European Division.

MEGAN MOLE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Yesterday I presented a suggestion to the committee regarding lines 28 and 29 that I deemed unnecessary, a cross-reference between this fundamental belief and number 6 on Creation, and also the in-text reference to Genesis 1 to 11, which is the only time an in-text reference happens and which is also repeated elsewhere in the following references to all of the different Bible verses.

I was just wondering if this was considered by the committee.

ELLA SIMMONS: We'll have a response from Dr. Steele.

ARTUR STELE: Yes, we considered all the recommendations, and our final outcome of our work was to stay and accept only one change here.

MEGAN MOLE: Thank you very much.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. We see no one else moving toward the microphones. This would indicate your readiness to take action.

All in favor of the motion as it is presented to approve fundamental belief 8, please raise your green cards. Thank you.

All opposed to this motion, please express using the green cards in the same manner.

Thank you. It is carried.

Dr. Steele, the next item, please.

ARTUR STELE: Yes. Now we go to fundamental belief 1. Yesterday we had no time to present it in totality. We just mentioned that this is a request to reconsider the word "final" since it has a chronological aspect to it. And because of that, I probably will present all of the changes right now so it will be very clear what we are talking about here.

Our intent was, when we were looking at fundamental belief 1, to strengthen the *sola scriptura* principle. And so to underline it, we have suggested the words "The Holy Scriptures as a final authority" and so on. And a number have approached us and discussed it with us and recommended that we should find a similar word but a word that would not have a chronological aspect to it.

And so in studying it, we also looked throughout the writings of Ellen G. White, how she is using the word and how she describes the Scriptures. We came up with a new word, and now we are suggesting, instead of "final," "supreme"—the Holy Scriptures as supreme, authoritative, and so on.

In addition, there is another change besides the rearrangement of the biblical passages. On line 22 we are suggesting to use the expression "the inspired authors" instead of "through holy men." And then

another change that God's Word has been committed to man. Instead of "man," we use the word "humanity."

And so I move, Madam Chair, with these changes, the whole fundamental belief 1.

ELLA SIMMONS: Right. We have the motion for the amendments to fundamental belief 1 as they were shown on the screen, and now the motion is before you.

It has been seconded. And we have speakers at three of the microphones just now. On microphone 4, Roger Robertsen, General Conference representative here.

ROGER ROBERTSEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee has been working hard to find a better word, but for me it's still not good enough.

In the preamble, we say on line 12, on the same page, "Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed." So I would suggest that we replace whatever word you've been mentioning now with the word "sole." It means that lines 25 and 26 will read "They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the sole revealer of doctrines." I believe in the *sola scriptura* principle. I accept Ellen White as an authority. But in this connection, we really need to state that we believe in the *sola scriptura* principle, so I suggest we use the word "sole."

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. We would like a comment from Artur Stele, please.

ARTUR STELE: We have considered many words, and this is the one we came up with.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. We understand the difficulty there. One of our screens has gone out completely here, so I'm going to move forward with—I believe I'm seeing Luis Tavares on microphone 1.

LUIS TAVARES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I salute you and greet you for the way you've been conducting this session, all of you. It's been a very good example of patience. I'd like to speak on this item. Yesterday we could debate on it. We just heard that a change was supposed to be made for today. But I have a comment. And I would like to have an explanation just to be clear.

Our main concern regarding our base—our foundation—of all the fundamental beliefs is the Bible. And the main issue we have in questioning the Bible by nonbelievers is concerning the writers:

Who wrote the Bible? Do I believe in a book written by man? And we are supposed to explain which kind of man did the writings. We had it here, which were—I would like to see the screen with the text changed.

We had it described as holy, godly men wrote it, inspired by God. And sometimes we take time to explain that God indeed used mankind to do His work. And we are just taking off from our fundamental belief of the manhood and replacing it with just “authors,” which I believe the main author of the Holy Scripture is God Himself. And we are just taking the “man” part, and we are supposed to explain to nonbelievers that, yes, God used men to write.

So my question is why—

ELLA SIMMONS: Five seconds.

LUIS TAVARES: —do we switch it from “men” to “authors”?

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. Right on time.

At microphone 2 we have Jim Howard from the North American Division.

JIM HOWARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I too would like to speak to line 22. The terminology “the uninspired authors” is, I don’t believe, what we would want to do to reflect what the Spirit of Prophecy uses when referring to those who wrote the Bible.

As far as I understand, she always used the terminology “God’s penmen” or “human writers,” but never referred to “humans” as the authors of Scripture. Only God is—the Holy Spirit is—the divine author. Humanity writes, but God is the one who authored the Bible.

And so that raises some concern with me. And I believe that the previous terminology did not create a problem. I know that we are trying to be very careful to be gender-inclusive, and I’ve appreciated some of those changes. But this particular one is simply a quote from Scripture that describes that holy men of God who were moved by the Holy Spirit are the ones who wrote the Bible.

And I don’t know why we would want to remove something that’s a scriptural reference, which strengthens the fundamental belief, and to replace it with what I believe is a little bit of a troubling term, to say that there were human authors.

Second, in response to a previous delegate, I would like to suggest that we remember that the *sola scriptura* principle does point to the fact that the gift of prophecy is an identifying mark of the remnant church and it does have doctrinal authority, though it must be tested by the Scripture.

So I would first like to address the issue to line 22 and see if you've thought about leaving the original Scripture reference in there. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. And Dr. Stele will take all of the comments into consideration, and we'll see if we can get a response toward the end of this round of discussion.

We go to microphone 4, Gerard Damsteegt, General Conference.

GERARD DAMSTEEGT: I appreciate the efforts for inclusive language. But, again, as I reiterated yesterday, inclusive language is used if you can substitute "male" and "female." In this case, you cannot, because there were no females that wrote any of the Bible.

Second, you can find females, but then you have to go to the higher critical scholars. They speculate, speculate, speculate.

But if you stay, as has been reiterated by *sola scriptura* in the Bible, we have to go back to "men."

Also, frequently yesterday we emphasized inserting the biblical text instead of other things. Here what we are doing is just the opposite. We have a plain biblical text, and now we divide it into two sentences, it becomes unclear, and we have the whole problem with human authors, inspired authors.

I did the research in the Spirit of Prophecy. Yes, she uses "authors," "human authors," but never for the Scriptures. It's always God is the author, Jesus is the author, the Holy Spirit is the author, and the writers are human writers, inspired writers, called penmen. Therefore, in the light of being biblical all the way through, *sola scriptura*, we should reject demonizations here and go back to the original text.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much for your comment.

ARTUR STELE: Madam Chair?

ELLA SIMMONS: Yes, Dr. Stele.

ARTUR STELE: Maybe this the time to give some explanation here.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK.

ARTUR STELE: A number of speakers have pointed out that this is a direct biblical reference and that we should stay with the Scriptures.

This is exactly what we have intended to do. The reference comes from 2 Peter 1:20, 21. There Peter uses the Greek word *anthropos*. Now, I know that if we now go into the meaning of *anthropos*, there will be a big discussion—it can mean both genders and so on; what does the plural mean; what does the singular mean; and so on and so forth.

But exegetically it would be best to ask: Is there another reference where Peter himself uses *anthropos* to make clear how he understood it?

And I would say that one of the best examples is 1 Peter 3:1-5. He addresses the wives, the women. And he speaks about behavior, about adornment. And in verse 4 he says, “But let it be the hidden person,” some translations say. Others say “hidden man of the heart,” and so on. Here he uses *anthropos*. So it is very clear that here Peter uses the same word and refers to women.

Now, in addition, when we go to 2 Peter 1:20, 21, we use this as a foundational text when we speak about the inspiration of Scripture. And here Peter uses *anthropos*. But when we read it very clearly, he doesn't say that men have written the prophecy. He says that *anthropos* have spoken the prophecy. And the Bible speaks about at least 10 women prophets, and a number of prophecies are really presented as they were spoken; for example, by Ana, by Miriam, and others.

And so to be biblically correct, here the best way to interpret, to translate, the word *anthropos* is to be gender-inclusive. We don't have this problem in other languages, only in English.

Most other languages have a special term for *anthropos*, which very clearly includes both.

And so we believe that if you want to be biblically correct, this is the way to go.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you, Dr. Stele. Please hold your applause. We appreciate your enthusiasm, but we're going to try to move through this item.

I see at microphone 2 Louis Torres from the North American Division.

LOUIS TORRES: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

ELLA SIMMONS: That would probably be the inclusive gender on “chairman.”

LOUIS TORRES: I perhaps should be as enthusiastic, being a doctor myself, as Dr. Stele, concerning the theological issue here.

First of all, the word *anthropos*, when Jesus uses it, for example, about the issue of divorce, He says, “Therefore shall an *anthropos* leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife.” When the disciples heard what He said, they responded, If this is a case with *anthropos* and his wife, “it’s not good to be married.” So the word *anthropos* can very definitely mean men. Because if you decide to put “Therefore shall a person cleave unto his wife,” then we could agree with the Supreme Court of the United States today.

So I think we need to be very clear that that word *anthropos* can also be singular. I did the Spirit of Prophecy research on who wrote the Bible. And constantly Mrs. White says very clearly, “Men wrote the Bible.” And since Dr. Stele is saying that they spoke, what you’re writing here is not what they spoke but what they’ve written. And since we are addressing what is written, it is clear from the Scriptures and the writing of Mrs. White that only men wrote the Bible. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. I appreciate your observing the time. Johng Haeng Kwon, microphone 6.

JOHNG HAENG KWON: Thank you, Madam Chair. All the fundamental beliefs are important, but some are more important than the others. Because like number 1, “The Holy Scriptures,” it sets the foundation for the rest of the fundamental beliefs.

And I’d like to make a comment on line 22, the inspired authors, as well. As some of us earlier commented, Mrs. White clearly made a distinction between authors and writers. God was referred to as author of the Bible, and the men who wrote the Bible were referred to as writers.

Mrs. White, in *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 25, says, “The Bible points to God as its author, yet it was written by human hands.” And then again, *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 21: “God, as a writer, is not represented [in the Bible]. The writers of the Bible were God’s penmen.”

Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. And we remain at microphone 6 with Passmore Mulambo from the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

PASSMORE MULAMBO: Thank you very much, Mrs. Chair. I resonate with the attempt for inclusive language, and I stand to speak within the idea of *sola scriptura*.

Because of the difficulty that we seem to have already—and when I notice line 22, we attempt to use 2 Peter 1:20, 21, but we tweak it. And I would suggest that instead of tweaking what we want to represent, could we not state the verse as it is within Scripture, within the *sola scriptura*? Because I believe this fundamental belief is foundational to scriptural authority, which influence all other fundamental beliefs that we have.

And so if the chair would permit me to make a motion that, instead of tweaking the verse, we actually state it in quotation marks.

ELLA SIMMONS: Brother Mulambo, it would be helpful, perhaps, if you make a suggestion and we could even get a response. But we do have a motion on the floor.

PASSMORE MULAMBO: Thank you, Madam Chair. My suggestion is that instead of tweaking the language of verses 20 and 21 of 2 Peter 1, we actually state the verse in quotation marks. And I so move it.

ELLA SIMMONS: Or suggest it. Thank you very much.

We have now at microphone 4 Eric Hensel.

ERIC HENSEL: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to—

ELLA SIMMONS: I'm sorry. Eric Hensel from the Inter-European Division.

ERIC HENSEL: Yes, that's right.

ELLA SIMMONS: I failed to acknowledge.

ERIC HENSEL: Thank you. I would like to support the suggestion made by Roger Robertsen. I would like rather to see the word “sole” instead of “definitive” in line 26 in order to make clear that SDAs stay on *sola scriptura* ground. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: And now we have on microphone 5 Kwabena Donkor from the General Conference.

KWABENA DONKOR: Thank you, Madam Chair. My comment has to do with the replacement of the word “final” with “supreme.” I think we are dealing with a fundamental belief that has to deal with the use of Scripture in the church and in theology also. I have no burden to have this item referred. But I’m wondering whether you considered the word “normative.”

I hear a lot of talk about *sola scriptura*. It seems to me that the impression sometimes is created that the concept of *sola scriptura* is a statistical concept. It is an issue of hermeneutics, which means that we are looking at the Bible as a source of revelation but which is the normative source.

So I’m wondering if you want to consider the word “normative” instead of “supreme.” Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. And we move to microphone 2, Edison Samraj from the Southern Asia Division.

EDISON SAMRAJ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I concur with the previous speaker who called for the word “normative” instead of the word “final.” The connotation of finality is normally nothing more, nothing beyond it, exclusive, nonnegotiable, and so on and so forth.

But I think I would like to suggest one more word that can give that focus to that word “final”; and the word is “ultimate,” because there’s nothing beyond it. And in understanding truth and keeping the Reformation principle *sola scriptura* as our foundational principle, I think it would be in order for us to give that focus that there’s nothing beyond, nothing above it—it’s the final word.

And, therefore, the word “ultimate” is more connotative of finality than even “supreme.”

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. On microphone 5, we have Lloyd Gibson from the General Conference.

LLOYD JAMES GIBSON: Madam Chairman, I speak to line 22 on the word “authors.” It seems to me that the use of this word does not exclude the concept that only men were involved, and it doesn’t seem to me to be a crucial point.

We could substitute words such as “writers” or even “people” and accomplish the same thing.

My own preference would be the word “writers,” but I have no strong feelings on this point.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. Again, on microphone 6, Juan Bosco Vanega, Inter-American Division.

JUAN BOSCO VANEGA [translated]: Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

ELLA SIMMONS: We have an adjustment here to give three minutes with translation. We’re starting now.

JUAN BOSCO VANEGA [translated]: I think when it comes to line 22, it refers to “authors.” Especially in Spanish, it would be a bit of confusion, taken in mind, with Ellen G. White. She presents God as the only author of the Bible. This is why the apostle Peter says that the doctrines are already explained. It would be better to leave it as it is, as Peter says, “men of God.” So after this, I believe we are ready to vote. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. We do have, on microphone 6, David Ripley from the Northern Asia-Pacific Division.

DAVID RIPLEY: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Perhaps it’s the word “authors” that may be tripping us up. If we make this gender-exclusive, then we have to be saying that the words of Miriam were not inspired or the words of the mother of Jesus, Mary, or Elizabeth were not inspired. And we don’t want to say that. We need to say that those who spoke and wrote were all inspired.

So I would say that we should keep it as it is here.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. We go to microphone 1, Allwell Omeonu from the West-Central Africa Division.

ALLWELL OMEONU: Thank you so much, Madam Chair. I am full of appreciation to the committee that put these materials in our hands. It seems to me, Madam Chair, that what we have is very adequate.

Since yesterday we've been talking more on semantics, at times on grammatical acrobatisms, and less, of course, on theological issues. What we have here is very adequate. Let's go by it. Thank you so much, Madam Chairman.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. Microphone 3, Jeroen Tuinstra, Inter-European Division.

JEROEN TUINSTRA: Madam Chair, with all due respect to Dr. Damsteegt and Brother Torres, unless they have some knowledge, we don't have and know all the genders of the authors of the Bible. We should applaud this change, unless of course you have some unbiblical prejudice that women could never write or prophesy any portion of the Bible.

Also, the Bible originated as an oral tradition, so the stories of the Bible were told and therefore prophesied, and God has never been gender-exclusive with prophets.

Today and yesterday it was claimed that the Spirit of Prophecy has authority over the formulation of doctrine. I would like to remind the delegates here of the following.

Ellen White says we are not to use her writings to settle doctrinal issues. The testimonies of Sister White should not be carried to the front.

“The Testimonies are not to take the place of the Word. . . . Let all prove their positions from the Scriptures and substantiate every point they claim as truth from the revealed Word of God” [*Evangelism*, p. 256]. “But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. . . . Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain ‘thus saith the Lord’ in its support.” And that's coming from *The Great Controversy*, page 595.

We're dealing here with the Bible. Let's stick to the Bible. Thanks.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. On microphone 4 we have Clinton Wahlen from General Conference.

CLINTON WAHLEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that we need to consider dividing the motion, because there have been a number of comments about lines 21 and 22. With due respect to my

colleagues on the Writing Committee, the word *anthropos* is defined by the context. Although the verse that is referred to refers to them speaking, the previous verse indicates that the speaking of prophecy is a prophecy of Scripture, that is, of writing.

And, yes, there were many women who spoke and whose words are recorded in Scripture in both the Old and New Testaments, but I don't think on that basis we would want to canonize the speakers; otherwise we would canonize people like Menander, who was quoted by the apostle Paul.

Also, it's good to stick with biblical language, as we did with belief 25, for example. Sometimes I think we bend over backwards when we don't have to. We should make it as clear as possible. And that will also facilitate its translation into other languages accurately, because biblical language is much easier to translate.

Furthermore, Ellen White never refers to this verse in a gender-neutral sense. She always refers to the writers of the Bible as men, and there's no evidence otherwise that we have from history or tradition.

So I will actually move to make a division of the motion to separate out these lines from the rest, which I support. I support all the other changes.

ELLA SIMMONS: We have a call for a division of the motion. Support or second is required.

I do see a second. There is no debate.

And a simple majority will determine this decision. So Clinton Wahlen, would you please repeat your call for the division of the motion? This is simply for clarity.

CLINTON WAHLEN: Certainly, Madam Chair.

I request that we vote separately on the changes in lines 21 and 22 from the rest of belief 1, on the Holy Scriptures, so that they would be two separate motions.

ELLA SIMMONS: If you will remain at the microphone, we need to see the document so that the body is clear. If you remain there, you can—

All right. The division of the motion is calling for the separation out of lines 22 and 23, the changes indicated there, allowing the remainder of this statement, that which comes before and that which comes after.

CLINTON WAHLEN: I'm sorry, Madam Chair, to interrupt. But I actually mentioned lines 21 and 22. Maybe I should just say 22. But I wanted to keep the full sentence there.

ELLA SIMMONS: You're absolutely right.

CLINTON WAHLEN: Or part of a sentence. I support lines 23 through 29.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. I needed that clarity if no one else did. Thank you very much.

OK. We have this before us. We're ready to vote. Please have your green cards. All in favor—hold on. OK. The motion is there to divide the motion, separating lines 21 and 22 from the rest of fundamental belief 1. And you are keeping the sentence together, as you said.

All in favor of division of the motion as stated, please raise your green cards.

All opposed to the division of the motion, raise your green cards.

The chair recognizes that the motion is defeated.

With that, we will go to microphone 3, Ed Keyes, North American Division.

ED KEYES: Yes, Madam Chair. I would not want to have your job to chair a committee of 2,500 people, but you're doing a marvelous job. I want to applaud Dr. Stele for his work. And I'd like to call question on the previous motion.

ELLA SIMMONS: We will give credit to the Holy Spirit, and we will hear that the speaker has called question on the previous motion. The motion is to move the previous motion that you see there on the screen.

So we want to prepare. OK. I wanted to verify that we will need two-thirds support to carry the motion. There is no debate. And it is supported to move forward.

All in favor of closing discussion, ceasing debate on this item with the call for previous question, please raise your green cards.

All opposed, please express with the same sign.

It is carried.

OK. We notice that those who were at the microphone basically have taken their seats, and we go back to the motion on the floor. Dr. Stele, the motion, please. And we wait for the item to come back to the screen.

ARTUR STELE: Maybe while we are waiting, I will ask one of our members to really explain what was the motivation. As we consider some changes to fundamental belief 1, it might be helpful.

ELLA SIMMONS: Is this a clarification of the motion rather than the continuation of the debate or discussion?

OK. I am informed that this is background information that would assist the body in understanding the motion. It is a clarification. And I think I see Bill Knott moving forward, so I will ask you to assist us, please.

BILL KNOTT: The committee is fully aware that we live in charged and contentious times, when others who mishandle Scripture attempt to read into it various agendas of social or political or cultural consequence. I can tell you, as someone who has functioned with this committee for the past four and a half years, that we have carefully, prayerfully worked to exclude those other social and cultural agendas from the work in front of you today. Our focus has been and continues to be one of integrity with the meaning of the Word of God and doing it in a way that Seventh-day Adventists around the world can wholeheartedly embrace and affirm this central understanding of the scriptures at the heart of our faith.

Many others, perhaps, have sometimes assumed that other agendas were creeping in. As someone who's been with this process throughout, I can assure you, we have made every attempt to exclude those.

ELLA SIMMONS: We are ready to take action on the motion. We need to see it on the screen again, please. This is the motion to amend fundamental belief 1 as presented. And if you would also display the presentation of the changes or the adjustments. Go back to that—OK. What I wanted to see. OK. This is what we have at this point. All right?

Back to the motion. We are ready. All in favor of the motion to amend fundamental belief 1 as presented, please raise your green cards.

All those opposed to the motion to amend fundamental belief 1 as presented, raise your green cards.

Thank you. It is clear, it is carried.

And we even had one or two others come to the microphone after we had to cease debate. We want to recognize the individuals in terms of explanation. There were perhaps nearly 10 people at the microphones when we were called to cease debate. They understood and left the microphone. I believe one or two others came after, and we were not able to take your comment because there was no more debate or discussion on this motion. I trust that you understand and that you appreciate that.

OK. We were prepared to move to the next order of business, but we do see two people at the microphones at this point. I am not sure what you would be offering at this time, but perhaps some wisdom of a general nature. I will take the risk of going to microphones 4 and 6, to those two people, beginning with microphone four, Eric Hensel, Inter-European Division.

ERIC HENSEL: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to ask what about all these good suggestions that were made to fundamental 1? I was too late to suggest that this fundamental may be referred back to the committee and they can reconsider all the good suggestions. I fear that is now lost, the work that was done on the floor.

ELLA SIMMONS: I appreciate your bringing this back, because we should be mindful of the fact that practically everything that was brought to the microphone from the floor has already been presented. And it has been stated several times that all of the suggestions, requests, ideas, are taken back to committee and, if not used at this time, can be held for future reference and future use. We have completed this item, and I would not like to see all of those who were at the microphone before the action was taken return.

I'm going to go to Dr. Stele right now to see what we have left to do, and if we have some general wisdom, nature—some comment of a general nature, perhaps we can come back to those.

ARTUR STELE: Yes, Madam Chair. What is left was to do is to consider fundamental belief 6. I believe it will take some time, and it would be good if we could start considering it. But before we do it, if

you allow us, we will give some introductory remarks so that our delegates would understand the work that was done in order to accomplish—

ELLA SIMMONS: It is important that you do so, so please lead us into this item.

There are two who remain at microphones. I'm going to assume that they are staking out their position early so that they will not get caught as they were before. If that's not the case, we will come to you at an appropriate time.

ARTUR STELE: OK. Madam Chair, we have received a number of suggestions yesterday. We have considered them, but all of our work on fundamental belief 6 was done throughout the years, and last night as well, in the light of the assignment that we have received to harmonize fundamental belief 6 with the statement of Affirmation of Creation.

And so we have considered many of those suggestions in this light. And I would like you to understand it, because this was our assignment that was voted by the session.

So we have not the freedom to do something else. And because of that, I would like to invite now some of the members of our Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee to explain what we have done and what was behind it.

ELLA SIMMONS: Dr. Stele, before we take this move, we recognize a point of order with Jay Gallimore, North American Division, on microphone 2.

JAY GALLIMORE: Thank you, Sister Chairman. No one envies your job. You're doing a nice job.

Just for clarification for the body, if we are making suggestions, are those suggestions sent back to be considered by the group, or if we just go right to the vote, then it doesn't matter to make suggestions; or should we be moving a change? We're a little confused on that. Some of us thought that suggestions were going to go back and the committee would consider them. Or should we be making motions?

If the chair would clarify that, we would appreciate it.

ELLA SIMMONS: I appreciate your calling attention to this. At the beginning we thought we had addressed that issue, and along the way we have tried. You will notice that the chair has repeatedly called on the members of the team to verify that suggestions that are coming have indeed been items or considerations that have come before the team prior to this report. They are on notice to acknowledge new light on the items that we have before us.

Of course a word can be different if we go through the dictionary or encyclopedia and just choose a different word every time in order to send it back. And I understand that that is not your intent, but rather you have been trying to find the best language to express the sound theological presentation of the item and to make the items clear in the use of language, and also to assist with translation.

We are listening carefully and perhaps have overdone the reference to the team members here to respond to items, but we want to assure you that the team has indeed considered the items that are being brought before us, the ideas and the suggestions on all sides of the various issues.

And I have called, at times, for a specific response just to help you to keep that in mind, for us to be mindful of that. If we slip, I'm sure, with the presence of the Holy Spirit and our good brothers and sisters here, we will be corrected, and we will find ways to deal with this, to work our way through each of these items.

Thank you very much for that.

Dr. Stele and your team, please.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. I invite some of our members to give some introductory explanation.

ÁNGEL RODRÍGUEZ: We knew from the very beginning that fundamental belief 6 would be a subject of particular interest to the delegates. And as the committee began to work on it, we came to an agreement among us that we were going to avoid as much as possible using language that was ambiguous, that would lend itself to read into the statement evolutionary ideas or to be interpreted along the lines of theistic evolution.

So we made an effort to exclude, as much as possible, terminology that was ambiguous, so that intentionally the statement is rejecting evolutionary thinking, theistic evolution, or any way of interpreting Genesis 1 along evolutionary lines.

This statement is totally incompatible with theistic evolution. And I think, in that, we are standing on the Adventist doctrine of Creation.

That is my first point. I want to make two more comments. The second one has to do with the use of the word “recent.” This word was found in the document Affirmation of Creation. We took it from there. We put it here. The term is not used to date Creation. In other words, the intention of the use of this term is not to date the divine act of Creation. If I’m not mistaken, the church has never officially—and I’m putting the emphasis on “officially” dated the divine act of Creation as recorded in Genesis 1.

Among Adventists there are different traditions. Some of them talk about 6,000, some talk about 10,000, 13,000. The intention of this is to argue that the Creation record, or the Creation itself, took place not too long ago. Creation took place not too long ago.

And by using this terminology, we are, in principle, rejecting deep time—the deep time that is part of the evolutionary theory of millions and millions of years.

We do have some basic biblical information that will allow for us to talk about a short chronology. We do have genealogies. And I would be the first one to acknowledge that the genealogies found in the Bible are not complete, but they provide enough evidence to indicate that Creation took place not too long ago.

My third comment is about the emphasis on the literal reading of the Creation narrative. We, the committee, worked with the understanding that Adventists have interpreted Genesis 1 through 3 to describe what literally happened there, and that this is a historical description of a historical event.

In fact, we assume as Adventists and Bible students that the history of our planet, that the history of human life and life in general on the planet, began with Genesis 1 and is part of the flow of the history of the planet. So it is with this in mind that we worked as we tried to edit the statement.

As for the seven days, literal days, which is part of this literal interpretation, we don't say—at least we're not suggesting—that these were seven days of 24 hours, 60 minutes each hour. We are not suggesting that, because we cannot affirm that. But we do affirm that the days were literal days. If they were two seconds shorter or longer, we're not going to fight over that. We have taken the days as the Bible indicates to be literal days.

I'm sure that we're going to continue to argue about words, which words are the best, which words are not the best. My hope is that at the end of the discussion, we can say, "I disagree with the use of this word or this phrase, but I stand by the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of Creation as summarized in the document."

God bless you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you for that bit of introductory information. Is there more? I think I see Bill Knott.

BILL KNOTT: There are many things that make me proud to be a Seventh-day Adventist, but the experience of the past five years and watching the process as this church has conducted a very thorough and careful evaluation of such a central belief as its belief in Creation has been very affirming to my own faith. I've been particularly proud of my church for the way it has listened during this five-year period.

You will recall that there was an entire year in this five-year sequence and called the Year of Listening. Well, that habit we have gained of learning to listen well to each other has served us well as a committee with the recommendations that came from the floor yesterday. And you will find the document is coming up in a moment for your consideration to reflect the comments that emerged from the floor from various quarters and points of view yesterday. The goal is always to find that better language that Seventh-day Adventists can rally around and that the vast majority of Adventists have historically believed.

In that context I would point you to the document that is now intended. This is what we would call, from an editing perspective, a clean copy—that is, uncluttered—so that you can see it as a positive statement.

You will note that the initial sentence that had been proposed in the document as of yesterday has been removed, the one that says, “God is Creator of all things.” It is not because we do not believe in God’s creative activity in all things. But one helpful comment identified that there were certain things in the material world formed by human beings that should not be laid at the charge of God; thus that sentence is removed. Now we have the beginning of the sentence, “God has revealed in Scripture the authentic and historical account of His creative activity.”

Next we heard from a number of respondents on the floor that we needed to carefully identify the historic Adventist understanding that God, at an earlier date, created angels and other portions of the universe before moving to the creation of Planet Earth. And we sought to embrace their contributions in the sentence that now begins “He created the universe, and in a recent six-day creation the Lord made ‘the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them,’ and rested on the seventh day.” The recitation of Exodus 20:11. The many comments made yesterday identifying the need for an understanding of sequence are embraced in what is now the second sentence of the document.

The third sentence, “Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His creative work, performed and completed during six literal days that together with the Sabbath constituted the same unit of time that we call a week today.” This merely conjoined the ideas that we had been mandated as a committee by the session of 2010 to bring together the Affirmation of Creation and the previous language of fundamental 6.

And from there, the document reads, as it did yesterday, “The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was ‘very good,’ declaring the glory of God.”

I hope that short rationale for the changes that the committee considered and is bringing back to you today will underscore the point that throughout this five-year process we have been listening intently to those who are offering positive suggestions for improving the language of this fundamental belief.

ELLA SIMMONS: Dr. Stele, do you have additional comment?

ARTUR STELE: I would like to move this suggested wording of fundamental belief 6.

ELLA SIMMONS: We have the motion with support to amend fundamental belief 6 as—

ARTUR STELE: And we have, Madam Chair, one additional explanation.

ELLA SIMMONS: I'm sorry?

ARTUR STELE: We have one additional speaker.

ELLA SIMMONS: Yes, we do. We're moving to the speaker we thought was not here to complete that round of introduction.

However, we do have the motion, and we have a second. We're beginning to populate the microphones. And if we could have this additional point of clarification. I presume, Elder Wilson, that it is a point of clarification? I assume that this is a point of clarification that was to be given along with the points that were just presented by Bill Knott and the others prior to the action.

TED N. C. WILSON: All right. Thank you, Sister Chair.

We appreciate the opportunity to share about this particular fundamental belief, and I want to thank you for the wonderful way in which you have progressed through these fundamental beliefs, the decorum and the well-presented arguments that each of you have made.

This particular item, as has already been referenced, was voted to be brought to the General Conference for discussion and refinement. It was brought to the floor of the 2010 General Conference session. It was referred to the General Conference, and, as I mentioned the other day, the process has been a rather long and extended one. This particular version that has now come to you is one that I personally very much endorse, and I hope that we will endorse this wording.

The committee has returned from its review of last evening or yesterday. They also have listened carefully, and they will listen again; we will all listen to whatever comments are made. I believe that this wording will help us to clarify things in a very poignant and very specific manner that is very much in accordance with Scripture.

There is an interesting observation, and it has been alluded to here already. I think Dr. Rodríguez mentioned the word "recent." You know, words are interesting things. You can put a spin on almost any

word to make it say what you think you would like it to say or what maybe someone else ought to think the word says. It's a kind of an interesting peculiarity in the spoken language.

But, in essence, we have come to the point where we need to clarify that this process was not old. So "recent" is supposed to mean "not old."

Now, someone might say, "Well, what is 'old'?" It's certainly not in the line of what either theistic evolution or evolution would interpret as "old." "Recent" is supposed to mean exactly what it says, recent. I will tell you from this pulpit, from this podium, personally I firmly believe in what the Spirit of Prophecy has indicated and with what we have understood in terms of biblical historicity that the earth is approximately 6,000 years old. We are not putting that language in here, but we are saying "recent." So "recent" does not mean 1 million years ago, 2 million, 5 billion. It means recent.

And I would interpret that to mean 6,000, approximately, years old, but some may not quite see it that way. But "recent" means it's not long ages. We believe in what Scripture has told us.

So, my dear friends and Sister Chair, I would very much support for belief 6 as it has been presented, but that is up to you. And we thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: All right. We are ready for comments. Thank you, Elder Wilson. James Standish, who has staked out microphone 3 for quite some time, from the South Pacific Division.

JAMES STANDISH: Good morning, Madam Chair. Yesterday I didn't get a chance to speak, so you learn from experience. Good morning, church family. I rise to support this motion, and I want to compliment the editorial work to actually make it stronger.

Yesterday we heard in our discussion that there is some confusion over what "day" means in Exodus 20. Friends, if we don't know that the first six days mentioned in Exodus 20, where we're told, "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." If the first six days weren't literal days, why on earth do we rest on a literal seventh day? There has to be some parallel reason—this is just context. I'm a lawyer, and that is how you would normally read a textual document. Therefore, I support this.

I also want to thank our scientists in our church who are strongly supportive of creation. We have a number in the South Pacific Division, and they have often been stronger supporting creation than sometimes our theologians are. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Standish. We noticed your law degree reference on your shirt.

Point of order is called on microphone 3, Wesley Szamko, Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

WESLEY SZAMKO: Szamko. Yes, Ms. Chair. I would humbly request that the statement be put on the full screen so that we can read and analyze it, since we don't have a written version to take a look at and read through. Thank you very much.

ELLA SIMMONS: Even as you speak. Thank you for reminding us. Microphone 3, Marvin Wray, North American Division.

MARVIN WRAY: Thank you. I would hesitate to speak anything that could be interpreted as being against this motion with my conference president sitting so close to me.

However, I really am troubled by the inclusion of the word "recent" in there simply because it really does not clarify. If we're seeking not to make things ambiguous, to me this makes it more ambiguous. It's not a biblical term.

The bottom line that applies to fundamental belief 1, which that we discussed as well, is that we can word these any way we want to, but when we go home, we're all going to interpret it and teach it according to our interpretations.

I like the explanation that God gave to Job when he told him and his so-called comforters, Quit your defining and be quiet and let Me ask you questions. Were you there when I laid the foundation of the earth? Were you there when I decided where the tides and the seas would stop? Were you there when I decided the gestation period of the various animals?

And I'm just wanting to keep it really simple.

At the end of the day, my question is: When I go back and teach my congregation, who's going to monitor whether I'm teaching it according to a formal definition or according to my understanding and my interpretation? Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. We go to microphone 4 Roger Robertsen, General Conference.

ROGER ROBERTSEN: Thank you, Sister Chair. I always get a sense of sadness when I read the expression we're using in the document here, "six-day creation" week. I really don't believe in it. I believe in a seventh-day creation week, because my Bible says that God finished His creation on the seventh day. The Sabbath is not a symbol; it's reality. And we, as Sabbathkeepers, Seventh-day Adventists, should use "seven-day creation week," because the Sabbath, even though it is invisible, it's still reality.

ELLA SIMMONS: Dr. Stele.

We know we love the Sabbath, but please hold the applause.

ARTUR STELE: Yes. We have considered this. And we felt that the reference to the Sabbath several times down below in the statement takes care of it. And so if you take the statement as a whole, it raises no question that we mean a week of seven days, including the Sabbath.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. You see it there before you. Thank you very much. Microphone 4, Kathryn Proffitt, also General Conference.

KATHRYN PROFFITT: Thank you, Sister Chair. I rise in support of this motion, strong support of this motion. I think it is so necessary. And let me illustrate this by a personal testimony. My child, my son, attended a Seventh-day Adventist university as a biology major. He left as an atheist because of confusion over this issue.

There was confusion with respect to science versus what the Bible says. And I praise God that he does not have to operate in terms of how empirical science humanly defines Creation. It really is important when we talk about words like "recent" or "literal days." To me, it's clear that I don't know about the seconds or the exact hours, but "even to even" means sunset to sunset.

I also believe that it is important to so many of our other fundamental beliefs. If God could not speak our life into existence, how could He re-create us instantly?

And so I think it's so important that we as a church clarify, for not only the world, but also for our teachers and professors so they know clearly where we stand. I've never seen greater integrity among some of the professors. This is really a point, I think, of confusion as to what our church teaches, and this motion clarifies it according to Bible principles. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. We will remain at microphone 4 with Clifford Goldstein, General Conference.

CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN: There have been some comments regarding why we need to be so specific with the language, and yet it's very important. And I think most of us realize that this issue didn't arise in a vacuum.

For decades now, there has been an attempt, one way or another, to try to bring into our church an ideology that is completely, totally foreign and alien to everything biblical, every biblical principle. And that's why Dr. Rodríguez was very clear about what we were dealing with here. We are purposely doing this to exclude evolution. I mean, we take the name "Seventh-day Adventist." Is it too much to ask people who take the name "Seventh-day Adventist" to actually believe the name that you take for yourself? I mean, is that a little too hard? All that—

ELLA SIMMONS: Dr. Goldstein, the microphones are working very well.

CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN: OK. Well, I get a little excited about it, as you can tell. OK.

On line 35 He created the universe. And I would suggest putting the adverb "and then" in a recent six-day creation the Lord made the heaven, the earth. I do think we want to be clear that we do not believe that the universe is 6,000 years old. And so I think—just adding that one word there, I think, would help make this distinction clear. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much for your words and your enthusiasm.

Dr. Stele, I wanted you to say a word. However, we have a point of order on microphone 6 with Jorge Romero Ipsilanti of the Inter-American Division. Microphone 6, point of order. Someone is making his way back. It looks like this is it. OK. And it looks that we will need translation.

JORGE ROMERO IPSILANTI [translated]: What we are requesting is to have the motion placed on the screen at all times. It's not necessary for us to see the participants.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. We have done the best we can with the presentation. And those who are working the equipment have been faithful with putting this back. It is helpful for us to see you sometimes so we can judge when you are moving and not. But we will do that. I trust that that is the gist of the point? OK. Thank you very much.

We have Floyd Morris at microphone 1.

FLOYD MORRIS: Thank you very much.

ELLA SIMMONS: I'll take this one, and then we'll come to Dr. Stele.

FLOYD MORRIS: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

My understanding in terms of the church's position as articulated by the president just now is that we believe that the earth has been created 6,000 years ago, approximately. Now, if I'm to go by the English language, it does not accord with the use of the word "recent." And I have a suggestion that I would want to humbly put, but because I have a visual challenge, I'm going to ask my wife to put forward the formulation. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Given the situation, I will take this as translation, perhaps not requiring additional time.

MRS. MORRIS: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is: "He created the universe and in our understanding of the six-day creation," eliminating "recent."

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. Was that understood by the team members? Yes? OK. I heard someone say something behind me, folks. Thank you very much, both of you.

Dr. Stele?

BILL KNOTT: The suggestion was made from the floor and had been considered as part of the committee's deliberations last evening about how to indicate the concept of sequence in the second sentence. We concluded, after a lengthy discussion, that the clause "He created the universe," with a comma, and a subsequent clause that begins "and in a recent six-day creation" in fact illustrates the sequence that Adventists have historically believed about God creating the angels and other portions of the universe and then at a later date moving to a six-day creation of the planet. However, the insertion of the word "later" seemed to us unnecessary given the two clauses separated by the comma.

ELLA SIMMONS: Does that conclude your remarks?

We go to microphone 6, Adrian Platts, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

ADRIAN PLATTS: Yes. I agree with the second sentence, notwithstanding the statements on "recent" with regard to a six-day creation. My problem is with the sentence "He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His creative week, performed and completed during six literal days that together with the Sabbath constituted the same unit of time that we call a week today."

We measure time according to a rising and setting sun. A week has elapsed when the sun has risen and set seven times. The week that is considered the template had a rising and setting sun on only three, possibly four, days, because the sun was created on the fourth day. This means there were only three or four literal days, and not six.

I would ask the committee to reconsider this wording. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. On microphone 4 we have Israel Kafeero, East-Central Africa Division.

ISRAEL KAFEERO: I thank you, Madam Chair.

I stand here to support the amendment. And first I want to thank the committee for their tireless efforts they put in, the time. They had enough time, ample time, for everybody to submit their recommendations.

We are not here to show scholarship. It is time to trust the Holy Spirit and to support our best scholars who have taken a lot of time studying this issue.

My children are going to be safe, because evolution has been taking a big toll on our schools. The word “recent” is necessary. And for that reason, I call the question to this motion.

ELLA SIMMONS: Do we have a second? We see it. All right. OK. We’re calling for the cessation of comment and debate at this time. The motion is to move to the previous question. And we complicate things just a bit with a point of order. I need to confer.

Midsentence, I will go to Jay Gallimore, North American Division, for a point of order.
Microphone 2.

JAY GALLIMORE: Thank you, Sister Chairman. Could I get the parliamentarian to rule whether a person has a right to make a comment—

ELLA SIMMONS: That’s what we’re looking at.

JAY GALLIMORE: —and then move the previous question? It appears to me that that’s not compatible.

ELLA SIMMONS: We have entertained this practice throughout this session, and it is in keeping with the rules of order. We know of nothing that prohibits this, and it is the chair that rules. Is that acceptable?

So we will continue with the call for previous question. I see—OK. Thank you.

All right. And we need two-thirds. And no debate. Are we ready?

All in favor of ceasing debate and comment with the approval of the motion before us to call previous question, please raise your green cards.

All opposed to the motion, express with the same sign, please.

The motion is carried to cease debate and to move to the motion.

Dr. Stele, would you please remind us of the motion? And, of course, we will take the last look at the item.

ARTUR STELE: Yes. The motion is to accept fundamental belief 6, to amend it as was presented.

ELLA SIMMONS: As amended, presented, in writing as you saw it on the screen.

ARTUR STELE: Right.

ELLA SIMMONS: Is that correct? All right.

All in favor of the motion, please express your approval with raising your green cards. This is to amend fundamental belief 6 as presented.

All opposed, please express your opposition with raising your green cards.

Clearly it is carried. Thank you very much.

My brothers and sisters, we will receive a final word, if necessary, from Dr. Stele and his team. But I commend you for engaging in this work this morning in the way you have. I believe we have completed the items that have been brought before us.

Dr. Stele?

ARTUR STELE: Yes, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank the delegates for helping us. It was a big task, but you have been very helpful, and you helped us to go through. And also I would like to say that, as we have announced in the beginning, all of the editorial changes, all of the recommendations, that have been accepted really do not change what we have always believed as a Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is what we have believed, and it is what we are believing. And I am proud of my church, which is really faithful to the Word. Thank you very much.

ELLA SIMMONS: At this point we express appreciation to the committee and to each one of you.

[Applause.]

ELLA SIMMONS: In that we have completed this round of deliberations and the related work, we're going to attempt to go to item 143, the Statement of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen G. White. I'll give you a moment to adjust.

Dr. Stele is with us, and he will lead us in this item.

ARTUR STELE: Sister Chair, I would like to remind us that as we yesterday accepted a statement about the Holy Scriptures, it is not our attempt—and was not yesterday—to present a

comprehensive understanding of the Scriptures, or today the writings of Ellen G. White. It is that every five years we make a special attempt to show that the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen G. White are relevant. So it's not an attempt to present in totality, but really something that we would like to emphasize.

And now in regard to the Statement of Confidence, we would like at this session to emphasize the following. I am reading "Statement of Confidence" on page 71. "As the delegates to the 2015 General Conference session in San Antonio, Texas, we express our deep gratitude to God for the continuing presence of the various spiritual gifts among His people (1 Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 4:11-14) and particularly for the prophetic guidance we have received through the life and ministry of Ellen White (1827-1915).

"On the centennial of her death, we rejoice that her writings have been made available around the globe in many languages, and in a variety of printed and electronic formats. We affirm our conviction that her writings are divinely inspired, truly Christ-centered, and Bible-based. Rather than replacing the Bible, they uplift the normative character of Scripture and correct inaccurate interpretations of it derived from tradition, human reason, personal experience, and modern culture.

"We commit ourselves to study the writings of Ellen G. White prayerfully and with hearts willing to follow the counsels and instructions we find there. Whether individually, in the family, in small groups, in the classroom, or in the church, a combined study of the Bible and her writings provide a transforming and faith-uplifting experience.

"We encourage the continued development of both worldwide and local strategies to foster the circulation of her writings inside and outside the church. The study of these writings is a powerful means to strengthen and prepare His people for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

I move it, Sister Chair.

ELLA SIMMONS: We have the motion, and I see a second over here. All right.

With this, we will take another look, of course, at the item, and we will project the motion on the screen. We're allowing for comments.

We see someone at microphone 4, Dennis Meier, Inter-European Division.

DENNIS MEIER: Madam Chair, I want to speak in support of the motion, and I want to speak to lines 21 and 22, the sentence that—

ELLA SIMMONS: Excuse me. May we see the item on the floor—

DENNIS MEIER: Yes.

ELLA SIMMONS: —on the screen. And I'll recognize your seconds ticking away. Yes, thank you.

DENNIS MEIER: Yes. There seems to be a discrepancy in the sentence, because if the first part is correct, it says that we uplift the normative character of Scripture. But if we say that we use the writings to correct inaccurate interpretations, I understand a correction to be a norm. So we are saying that we take that as normative as well. And I think the first part of the sentence expresses very well what we think and believe, that she uplifts the normative character of Scripture.

So I would suggest and move to amend the sentence to omit the second part, and close after "Scripture." Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: I do not see support. We need a second for amendment. Do we see that? We do. Please return for clarity and restate.

DENNIS MEIER: I'm getting hit by the microphone. I would like the sentence to be changed to read "Rather than replacing the Bible, they uplift the normative character of Scripture," period.

ELLA SIMMONS: Trusting that this is clear, microphones are open for comment and for comment from the presenters on the amendment. Please, what line again? Secretariat needs to—wants to focus.

DENNIS MEIER: We're talking about lines 21 and 22. The sentence that runs through 23.

ELLA SIMMONS: Oh. OK. Line 22 is blank on our screen. We're trying to—is it 20 and 21, 20 ...

DENNIS MEIER: Well, on the screen it will be—let me just see—

ELLA SIMMONS: Going down, or scroll up.

DENNIS MEIER: We have the resolution on the Holy Bible on the screen, and we're talking about another resolution here.

ELLA SIMMONS: It's the wrong one?

DENNIS MEIER: Yes.

ELLA SIMMONS: That's why we were confused up here.

DENNIS MEIER: That's possible.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. We recognize and we appreciate the work of those who are scrambling to pull these items and to project them for us.

While they are making the change, we need to recognize a point of order, I think, unless that has changed. OK. Perhaps it was on the same item. You've been most helpful with these. We appreciate it.

Now we have the right document, and now we're going to lines 21 and 22. Please restate, for clarity.

DENNIS MEIER: For clarity, I would move to amend the sentence to read "Rather than replacing the Bible, they uplift the normative character of Scripture," and to delete the rest of the sentence. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. Is this clear to members of—to Dr. Stele, who is representing? Yes, this is clear?

We're voting on the amendment at this time. We do have others at the microphones. We have, at microphone 4, Ronald Nalin, General Conference.

RONALD NALIN: Yes. Speaking on the suggested amendment, I think maybe the verb that is causing some trouble to the brother is use of the verb "correct." But, for example, we could use the word "expose," and so maybe the perceived conflict wouldn't be there anymore.

I did notice, as well, that by using the word "correct" we seem to have a contradiction in our hermeneutics, because we are saying that we are correcting inaccurate interpretations. Interpretation has to do with hermeneutics, so we would be saying basically that to decide whether an interpretation is correct or incorrect, which is the work of hermeneutics, we use the writings of Ellen White.

But if we were going to say she exposes incorrect interpretation, then the lesser light points us to the greater light, and then we can use Scripture to decide how to do our hermeneutics.

ELLA SIMMONS: We recognize the suggestion there. Dr. Stele, you have that. Microphone 4, Clinton Wahlen, also General Conference.

CLINTON WAHLEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would speak in favor of the way this has been presented here and against the motion to amend it. I think that the wording is good.

I think especially important are these lines 22 and 23 because the Spirit of Prophecy has helped us avoid wrong ideas derived from church tradition; human reason, which often is manifest through critical approaches to Scripture; personal experience, which might seem to be spirit-inspired or spirit-led, but may not be correct, may be of another spirit; and, of course, modern culture, which we feel and recognize acutely.

So I speak against the motion to amend. I'd like to suggest that the word "normative character of Scripture" makes it clear that we stand on the foundation of *sola scriptura*. The Spirit of Prophecy is simply the lesser light pointing to the greater light. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. We have your suggestion. Microphone 3, Vivencio Bermudez, Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

VIVENCIO BERMUDEZ: Thank you, Madam Chairman. As a division Spirit of Prophecy coordinator, I take this golden opportunity to highly commend and strongly support the committee for this very intentional Statement of Confidence, reaffirming the existence of the gift of prophecy in the church. This is very important—

ELLA SIMMONS: Brother Bermudez, are you speaking to the amendment?

VIVENCIO BERMUDEZ: A remark—

ELLA SIMMONS: To the amendment. If you're speaking to the original motion, you'll have to hold that thought, please. We are dealing with the amendment to the motion at this time. OK.

We will go to microphone 3, Ray Roennfeldt, South Pacific Division, speaking to the amendment.

RAY ROENNFELDT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to speak in support of the amendment. I think the rest of that sentence that is proposed to be deleted is, in fact, quite different from what we voted yesterday in regard to the Spirit of Prophecy. So I would like the committee to relook at this statement, to take account of what we voted yesterday in regard to the fundamental belief statement on the Spirit of Prophecy.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. Then we go to Jim Howard, North American Division, microphone 2.

JIM HOWARD: Yes. Thank you. I think it's fascinating, the discussion that's happening here now. Because yesterday, when we discussed the Spirit of Prophecy fundamental belief, we addressed the issue that, by removing truth from the fundamental belief, it may bring about the very thing that's happening on the floor right now, which is people questioning whether or not what we really did yesterday was removed the Spirit of Prophecy as having any doctrinal authority. So I really feel that that may be a need to be readdressed.

As it stands, I think it's very good, and I would speak against the amendment. I just want to bring to the delegates this statement from *Early Writings*, page 78.

ELLA SIMMONS: In regard to the amendment?

JIM HOWARD: Correct.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. Thank you.

JIM HOWARD: "I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the '*last days*'; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth." Very clearly, the gift of prophecy given to us was for, at least in part, the purpose of correcting those who err in their understanding of the Bible, and we need to uphold that. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. I have been notified that we have five minutes remaining in the morning session. We have three more speakers who have indicated they wish to speak to the amendment to the motion, and then we have two individuals who wish to speak to the original motion.

It would be in order to determine the body's desire to extend this session for a specific number of minutes, or to go to our time, end discussion with the end of the session, and move this item on to the afternoon session.

John Thomas.

JOHN THOMAS: Madam Chair, my recommendation, we extend five minutes beyond the 12 o'clock hour.

ELLA SIMMONS: Is that a motion?

JOHN THOMAS: I move it.

ELLA SIMMONS: Is there support for going five minutes beyond the prescribed time, which would take us to 12:05? There is support.

Can we just go to the vote? All in favor of extending the time by five minutes, show your cards, please.

All opposed, please show your cards.

It is carried. We will end wherever we are at 12:05 and determine the next steps in this process.

We go to microphone 4, Gerard Damsteegt, General Conference, speaking to the amendment only.

GERARD DAMSTEEGT: Correct. There is a problem with the amendment. And I would like to cite the words of the prophet in regard to the relationship of correction. "The Word of God is sufficient to enlighten the mostly beclouded mind, and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it. But notwithstanding all this, some who profess to make the Word of God their study are found living in direct opposition to the plainest teachings.

"Then, to leave men and women without excuse, God gives plain and pointed testimonies, bringing them back to the Word that they have neglected to follow" [*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 31].

So here you see a clear statement that will be in opposition to the amendment, and therefore I would simply move to cease discussion.

ELLA SIMMONS: Are you calling for the previous question?

GERARD DAMSTEEGT: Correct.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. With this, we will cease discussion and comment, in that we do have support. The body is ready.

All in favor, please express your favor with the raising of your green cards.

All opposed, please use the same sign.

It is clearly carried.

We will cease discussion. I need a point because we were discussing the amendment.

OK. This is that we have ceased discussion on the amendment, so we will—and you have expressed your desire to move forward. I think I saw that. We're going to the main motion.

Right. That's what I was trying to clarify. I was so busy watching the time. We were on the amendment. We had the call to cease discussion on the amendment. You expressed your desire to cease discussion on the amendment.

Now we go to vote on the amendment. And you did see the amendment on the screen, so we want that back. The amendment reads "Rather than replacing the Bible, they uplift the normative character of Scripture," period, deleting the remainder of that sentence.

OK. Are you ready to vote on the amendment? If you favor the amendment, if you vote to approve the motion to amend, please raise your green cards.

If you oppose the amendment, please raise your green cards.

The amendment is defeated.

And we go to perhaps the remaining two speakers for the main motion, as we return to the main motion.

Brother Bermudez, we can now take the remainder of your comment. You're there on microphone 3.

VIVENCIO BERMUDEZ: Thank you, Madam Chairman. In connection with the Statement of Confidence, if it is proper, may I raise a question as to what is the real stand of our church with regard to the Spirit of Prophecy, or Ellen G. White's writings? First, is it a test of fellowship? And the second is Is

it a test of leadership? When I mean “test of fellowship,” can we baptize a person who does not accept fundamental belief 18? And can we appoint a church leader who is not a firm believer of the gift of prophecy?

We thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. We have Lowell Cooper, General Conference, on microphone 4.

LOWELL COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a question about the expression “modern culture” on line 23. And I’m wondering if the use of this expression doesn’t allow room for an interpretation that suggests wrong interpretations of Scripture coming from premodern cultures would not be addressed. It seems to me that if we deleted the word “modern,” we would strengthen the document by including all forms of culture, not just modern.

ELLA SIMMONS: Dr. Stele, very quickly, that suggestion, have you dealt with that?

ARTUR STELE: I believe that the committee would have no problem with doing it.

ELLA SIMMONS: In that you have not dealt with that, that would constitute an amendment to the motion; is that correct? We could go for consent, possibly, if no one objects to that. Should we test for consent?

Please raise your card if you object to this suggestion by consent.

I do see one, and we would respect that one.

It has to be a motion if we are to consider it at this time.

Elder Cooper, did you intend a motion, or were you offering a suggestion for contemplation?

Suggestion. Thank you.

We move on to Eric Hensel, Inter-European Division, microphone 4.

ERIC HENSEL: When we say that the writings of Ellen G. White correct inaccurate interpretations of the Bible, I feel that we, with good intentions, make a mistake with our hermeneutics with the sentence in line 22, where we say that we believe in *sola scriptura*. But with using Ellen White to “correct inaccurate interpreting of the Bible,” Ellen G. White becomes the normative over the Bible

and how the Bible should be read. This leads to the use of her writings as a corrector of biblical authority, as if everything she wrote were 100 percent what we can understand in the Bible. We would exclude the Holy Spirit for every reader and never grow in knowledge if we take the sentence as we read it.

So I would rather see the sentence changed. Thank you.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you very much. We are rapidly nearing our allotted time. It appears that we probably have less time than that which would be allotted to the next speaker of two minutes. It appears that we are close.

The chair is willing to hear a motion if you would desire a further extension, but we would hold to our pledge to you to end at 12:05, if there is no such expression by the body.

I see cards waving, but I'm unable to interpret.

John Thomas?

JOHN THOMAS: Madam Chair, because of the time that has now expired, I'll call question on the motion.

ELLA SIMMONS: That's another approach. We have called question on the motion. That would end the debate. That would bring us to the motion in question here, the original motion. And I did see support? More than one.

Let us test this. All in favor of approving the motion as was stated, I think we should see it. The previous question. I'm looking at it. I'm sorry. Ready for the previous question.

All in favor of ceasing debate for the previous question, please raise your green cards.

All opposed, same sign.

Thank you. It is carried. In this case, we do actually move to the original motion. And if we can see that motion as well. Dr. Stele, please remind us, and we will move forward.

ARTUR STELE: Yes. We will vote to approve the "Statement of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen G. White," as presented.

ELLA SIMMONS: OK. And there is support.

So all in favor of approving the statement of confidence in the writings of Ellen G. White as presented here, please express such by raising your green cards.

Thank you.

All opposed, would you express yourselves in the same way.

ARTUR STELE: Madam Chair—

ELLA SIMMONS: It is carried. Thank you.

Dr. Stele?

ARTUR STELE: I would just like to remind the delegates that it was stated that this statement is against the fundamental belief about the gift of prophecy. I would just remind that, in the statement that we voted yesterday, we have the following sentence: “Her writings speak with prophetic authority and provide for comfort, guidance, construction, and correction to the church.”

So it’s in harmony with our fundamental beliefs. Thank you very much.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you for that point of clarification. Brothers and sisters, it is lunchtime. And we leave here this morning with our Statement of 28 Fundamental Beliefs and our Statement of Confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy. I applaud you all.

And we will call for the benediction by Eric Tell from the Trans-European Division. Please rise with us as we end.

[Prayer.]

ELLA SIMMONS: There is still an effort to collect voted devices. You may want to do that during this period. We will return at 2:00. Be nourished and be safe. Thank you.