

## ELEVENTH BUSINESS MEETING

*Sixtieth General Conference session, July 8, 2015, 9:29 a.m.*

MICHAEL RYAN: All right. We would like to begin to call our session to order. I would invite you to find a place. Be seated. We're making progress on that. I still see quite a few hallway committees.

We have a full agenda today and would like to take advantage of every moment, if we can.

OK. I'm just going to give a few more seconds here. I would encourage you to find your place. I think we're making progress, but we're not quite there yet. I see quite a number collected here in the front. If I could encourage these folks to take a seat.

I realize that some may be hearing this in a foreign language.

All right. While we're making a little transition, we're having some difficulty with places for the official delegates. And I would request that if you are a special guest, you would find a place in the overflow seating at the back of the auditorium.

And there are places back there, there's ample room to sit. We need to reserve the seating at the front near the microphones for those who wish to participate in the discussion that will follow, but I request those who are special guests, please find a place in the overflow seating in the back of the auditorium.

All right. We're almost there. I see quite a number buzzing in the aisles here, and there are a few committees still left. Please, I encourage you to immediately end those committees. Let's have a moment of silence here. I want to open the session this morning with prayer. But I would like for us to have silence, not quite for a half hour, but at least for a moment while we have prayer.

All right. Before we take up any business of the hour or make any presentations, I have asked my good friend and a good friend of many here, Elder Calvin Rock, Dr. Calvin Rock, retired, but he was a former vice president of the world church, to come and have our opening prayer.

Please, Dr. Rock, would you please pray for us as we open this session?

CALVIN ROCK: Shall we stand?

[Prayer.]

[Song.]

MICHAEL RYAN: Thank you. What a beautiful message to begin our session today with.

Today we have come to take up the business of the theology of ordination item that was voted by the delegates as part of the official agenda.

I realize that as we look at the history of the church over the past 40-plus years, this comes to us today as an item and a road that we have walked before. It is not a new item.

And I also realize that in this house we have various opinions. I will not soon forget the Annual Council that took place in 2014 when this item was presented to representatives at the General Conference Executive Committee. The reason I won't forget that meeting is that there was a special spirit in that hall. I think if you will ask anyone who was there, we took time to ask that the Spirit of the Lord would fill our hearts, and we did that often during that meeting. And there was a sweetness. Yes, there were clearly people who had differing opinions.

And I have been praying for months that that same spirit would dominate this meeting.

Now, I realize that we have a little extended group this morning besides those that are delegates. By the way, I've noticed that there were some vacant spots in the past few days during certain items, but I have noticed the chairs have filled in pretty good this morning. And, in addition, we have quite a number who are observers to our process.

But there are a couple things that I think we need to realize. We have some major objectives. Certainly, we want to carry the business of this hour, but we also want to take every opportunity to show respect to people who may be of a different opinion than we are. We want to have a sweet spirit fill this house. And there are things that mitigate against that. And I want to just mention them briefly. And I will not only appeal to the delegates who are seated on the floor, but I am making this appeal to those who are also seated as observers.

And it is that when people make a comment, you may like it, you may fully endorse it, but I would ask that you would not give applause to something that you particularly support. Because we have

found that when that takes place, it begins to build a momentum on items that we know we have a little contention in the house.

And so, as people make speeches, I will remind you every time that that takes place, if you happen to forget—I'm sure you won't. But we are not encouraging an applause for any type of speech that is on the floor.

Also, I would request that all of the comments that eventually will come in the program will be addressed to the chair.

You should know that, if comments become personal, pointed at someone else, made about someone else's opinion, I will interrupt you and remind you that we need to address the chair.

We have come today to hear the voice of the world church, and that is so important that every presentation that is made, we show that respect to each other.

So I'm making that request at the beginning.

Today we are here to enter into this agenda item as a sequenced series of events. We voted that sequence. I will follow it. There will come a moment when we will open the floor for discussion, but that will be after we place several things before the body.

Now, why are we taking the time to do this? I realize that there are many here today who have read many documents, you have been part of many committees, you are well aware of the issues, you have read papers on both sides of the issues.

But I want us to keep in mind that we are a church that values the opinion of our laypeople, and that by the constitution and bylaws 51 percent of the delegates in this room are laypeople, and some of them may not be familiar with our processes.

I ask those that are to be patient with them.

Also, there may be some who are not familiar with the issue. They've read a lot of things.

And so I think to position this properly before the body, we need to quickly go through a short process.

Now, you need to know that one of the major objectives of today is to have as many people as possible stand behind the microphone and give their opinion, and I will be making a few comments about that a little bit later. But right now I want to move into a sequence of events that places the item before the body and gives a little orientation to the group on this issue.

Now, I realize some may have heard this before, but please keep in mind that we have at least half of the body who come here and they have not had the privilege of many committees and the readings of papers as many have had.

And so to begin this sequence of events, Elder Wilson is going to provide an introduction to this and provide a history that gives us some concept of where this item has traveled in the church.

Elder Wilson, please come and share with us those items.

TED N. C. WILSON: Thank you, Brother Chair, and good morning to each of you. What a privilege it is to meet together at this sixtieth General Conference session to hear reports and to do business and to carry on these activities that are so essential.

That beautiful song that we heard just before the beginning of the proceedings, "I Give You Jesus." My dear friends, today in our activities and our discussion, may that song, "I Give You Jesus," ring in our minds and hearts, for may everything we do glorify Jesus.

There's a group here that I want to introduce before we get into an explanation about this particular topic. This group is presenting Jesus. This group is following the beautiful lyrics of that song, "I Give You Jesus." And I thought that this morning it would be an appropriate time to introduce a group of young people, young people who are involved in frontline evangelism, young people from the Trans-European Division, from the Inter-European Division, from the South Pacific Division, and the Inter-American Division. And for the past two weeks this group, 200 young people, have been preaching God's word in a two-week evangelistic series held in partnership with local congregations in the great country of Mexico.

These young people are now to return home with a renewed sense of our message and our mission and with a greater commitment to share Jesus. "I Give You Jesus." I know that their lives will

never be the same again. And in our discussion today, which is part of our church activity, our ultimate goal for everything we do is the mission of giving Jesus to the world.

And so I would like this group, which is part of the Share Him group, to stand wherever you are. I think they're all seated over there. Let's give them a wonderful round of applause.

[Applause.]

Thank you, young people, on behalf of the world church. We are so excited you are going back home filled with the zeal of evangelism. God bless you in this work.

Brother Chair, I want to thank you for the opportunity to give an introduction to this agenda item relating to the theology of ordination. Our heartfelt desire is that the Holy Spirit will be in control of all that we do and say and the outcome of the discussion. People have been praying earnestly, and we need to be in a spirit of prayer today as we share and as we vote.

We also want a very open and fair discussion.

As with our discussion in the 2014 Annual Council in Silver Spring, Maryland, we want a very open and fair discussion so delegates will feel free to comment on any aspect of this subject and not feel limited.

When the motion is presented, you can comment on what is on your heart.

In our discussion, I hope that all will respect the rights of individuals, as our chair has already indicated: the rights to express yourself and to allow for the entire time that has been allotted for discussion.

We have set aside this entire day for this subject. I am hoping—and I say this with all humility and with an earnestness: we cannot dictate, we cannot force, but I am appealing to you. I would hope that no one will use parliamentary process to cut off debate on this subject by moving the previous question. We can't force anyone not to do that. I am appealing to you. We have set aside this entire day and a majority or a good portion of the day for discussion. Please allow for discussion.

If no one is standing at the mikes, no one is there to speak, yes, then let's call the question. Allow people to kindly discuss.

Please don't try to table the motion. Let's let discussion take place within the allotted time period that will continue until approximately 4:30 this afternoon, which was indicated in our agenda acceptance when Pastor Ng introduced our agenda on Thursday.

I'm hoping that if any attempt to limit discussion is somehow placed on the floor, this body will turn that down and allow for full discussion. It's up to you. We can't control people, but let's have the appropriate amount of discussion.

We've come here to kindly, charitably, and respectfully discuss this item during the full time of discussion provided for until the voting.

Also, I say this with great respect, and it may be attempted—I don't know—but I hope that no one will come with an amendment to the motion.

I can't control that. The chair can't control that. If someone does that, that's your right. But I'm asking and appealing that you not try to amend the motion. And I'll explain that just a little bit later.

A very careful approach has been taken to place this motion before the body. And, of course, delegates have the right to do what they would like to do, but I ask and appeal to you that we will have full discussion on the motion.

We will be voting by secret ballot today. Everything has been arranged. Our IT people have organized things very carefully; the chair will explain that and others. We will be doing things by secret ballot and according to those who have badges. So badges are important today so that you can verify that you are a delegate.

But I want to make this statement: Every delegate is to vote his or her own conscience after studying the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy, various materials, and listening to the impressions of the Holy Spirit. Others can certainly share their opinions with each other, and they can share comments. But your vote should be yours and yours alone, according to your conscience, guided by the Holy Spirit. That's why we'll have a secret ballot, and no one will know what you vote except for you and Heaven.

This is a sacred responsibility. It's a vote between you and God.

I want to thank the world church for the respect and for the Christlike demeanor that we have seen in the last few days. I made an appeal to you. And I am so grateful to God for the way our sessions have been proceeding. Let's pray for God's guidance today as we show a calm spirit, even as we share our deeply-felt convictions.

Let's not direct our remarks against people, as our chair has indicated, but rather, speak directly to the issue itself.

As delegates, church members, men and women of God, let's claim the promise of James 1:19, which says, "So, then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

Allow me to give just a little bit of history. The General Conference and various committees have studied this subject since the early 1970s or even before. The historical documents and papers related to so much of this subject have been appropriately identified and posted on the Web site of the General Conference Secretariat's Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research at [Adventistarchives.org](http://Adventistarchives.org). That is where many of you have found the Final Theology of Ordination Study Committee materials and other related documents that have been produced over the past three years or so.

During the General Conference session on July 11, 1990, the session addressed the question as to the ordination of women to the gospel ministry, responding to a recommendation that came from the 1989 Annual Council that the church not move ahead with that process. The 1990 General Conference session delegates voted and agreed with that recommendation, and the current position that we have was maintained.

In 1995 the issue was again addressed at the General Conference session in Utrecht in the Netherlands. On July 5, 1995, the General Conference session received a request from the North American Division that was passed on to the session.

Now, here is a nuance that needs to be understood. There was no recommendation from the 1994 Annual Council to the General Conference session. It was simply to pass on a request from one of the divisions, the North American Division, that the General Conference invest in each division the right to

authorize ordination of individuals without regard to gender. The 1995 General Conference session decided not to accept the request and to maintain the current position of the world church.

Then at the most recent General Conference session, in 2010 in Atlanta—and many of you were there—a delegate raised the question about our lack of a theology of ordination. It was not a motion that was made. It was simply a question raised on the floor.

We never voted anything in the 2010 session of the General Conference, but we heard the plea of that delegate. We took that item and took it to our Steering Committee, and then we indicated that we would take that request and would come back with a response.

After the Steering Committee had considered, we indicated the next day that there would be an attempt to bring about an understanding of what our theology of ordination was. Earlier in this quinquennium the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, known as TOSC, was composed of individuals who have convictions on both sides of the question, most of whom were not administrators. There were a few administrators on TOSC who were nominated or suggested by their divisions, and the three executive officers of the General Conference were also members.

Many of the individuals on TOSC came from the North American Division. There were also two representatives from each of the divisions. In addition, there were biblical research committees of each division involved and entered their comments and thoughts into the process.

TOSC met two times in 2013 and two times in 2014, with many papers presented and discussions taking place. We thank the members of TOSC who took so much of their time to listen, to study, to present, and to pray. And we will spend time praying today, as you have seen in our agenda. We want to allow God to influence our minds as to what He wants us to do.

Prior to the 2014 Annual Council of the Executive Committee, reports from TOSC were well circulated so that every member of the Executive Committee and invitees would receive appropriate reports and information. It was not a hidden document, and we encouraged members all over the world to access this information and to study and pray about this subject.

Today we will be hearing brief synopses of each of the positions that are found in the TOSC report, just after Pastor Artur Stele, who was chair of TOSC, shares a brief review of TOSC and other past studies.

After the reading of the three synopses by the business session secretary, we will hear the reading of the Consensus Statement of the Theology of Ordination, which came from TOSC and was voted and endorsed by the 2014 Annual Council. That statement, a “Consensus Statement on a Seventh-day Adventist Theology of Ordination,” is not being brought here for any discussion or for a vote by the General Conference session, but simply as information. It was voted at the 2014 Annual Council, and it is terminal with that council.

Allow me to tell you how we came to the process conducted at the 2014 Annual Council.

Senior officers from the General Conference and the divisions prayerfully and carefully considered how to approach this item. There were differing opinions and still are. People were absolutely free to express their opinions. However, as we worked together, as we prayed together, we began to see how perhaps we could address this particular question.

A recommendation was brought to the group we call the General Conference and division officers. It expresses exactly the composition: General Conference officers; division officers. The three officers of each division and the three officers of our attached union and a few others make up this group, including the General Conference officers.

That group considered a recommendation brought to them in a prayerful process. I want to tell you: There was a sweet, Christlike spirit in our meeting. A recommendation without any dissenting person was voted in General Conference and division officers, to be brought to the 2014 Annual Council. The recommendation from the General Conference and division officers was discussed at the 2014 Annual Council and was overwhelmingly approved to be brought to the 2015 General Conference session to you.

And this is important, that you understand what Pastor Ng is going to be giving to you as the motion. The motion which was passed at the Annual Council coming here is a nonweighted, neutral

question. It's a nonweighted, nondirectional question. The General Conference session owns this question, having considered it twice in the past. Pastor Ng will soon present that motion to you as a motion to then be discussed, a neutral question upon which you must decide yes or no.

I just wanted you to know the process that was taken and the beautiful spirit that we saw during the 2014 Annual Council process. We do not have, as the Israelites did, the Urim and the Thummim, in which God would either brighten or cloud a stone so that people could understand the response to a question. We do not have the hovering cloud over the tabernacle or the pillar of fire. We do not have the shekinah glory in the most holy place. We do not have a living prophet. What we do have is what the Spirit of Prophecy indicates.

When the General Conference is in session, it has authority, and in some cases it indicates highest authority. Whatever this body votes, after prayerful consideration and review, one way or the other, I pledge to uphold that decision.

I ask each of you to do the same. We need to be open to what God wants. That's why we have felt it important to place a question before the highest body of authority, which is you, the General Conference in session, since every one of us has a sacred responsibility when we come to this General Conference session.

So, Brother Chairman, thank you for the privilege to address this session. I also want to assure you that during this process we have attempted to be open and fair as much as possible. Although we have our own personal convictions, we need to be open to God's leading.

Let's have full respect for each other and speak with the kindest tones, as we recall the special appeal made to all of us last Thursday morning coming from the General Conference and division officers asking for Christlikeness and respect for each other. Let's not deride or denigrate anyone. Let those listening and watching, those who are not delegates, those who are watching through electronic means, those who will hear, let them say, "I am proud to belong to the Seventh-day Adventist Church that allows the Holy Spirit to lead us."

Brother Chairman, in closing, I want to reserve the right and opportunity, if he wishes, to have our former General Conference president, Pastor Jan Paulsen, to speak sometime during the discussion at your discretion.

I also would request the opportunity to make a statement at your discretion. As we go into this process, I will be praying. And I ask each of you to pray.

Thank you for your kind, considerate, Christian courtesy and cooperation. May the Holy Spirit truly be in this place and lead us in this process.

Again, your discussion and your decision will be based upon your personal study of the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy and related materials, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There is an enormous mission and role ahead for God's remnant church. That role is now opening before us as we take our prophetic place in history, to proclaim Revelation 14 and Revelation 18, which I might indicate was one of the chapters for us to read today in Revived by His Word. We are to proclaim the loud cry of the third angel and accompanied by the fourth angel. Let us unite in Christ and His John 17 wish, that we may be one in Him to accomplish His final plans for the salvation of humanity. Through the Holy Spirit's power, He will use you and me as a united church.

Arise! Shine! Jesus is coming!

Thank you, Brother Chair.

MICHAEL RYAN: I heard you applauding. To avoid a point of order, I will make mention that I want to try to avoid that if we can. I realize we were talking about things that we all solidly embrace, but I do want to make mention of that.

Now we are going to enter into a time, I think, that is the most important time we're going to spend on this item. And I know many times we have a moment of prayer, and we invite the body to pray. But I hope that we can recognize the gravity of the issue before us and that it is only from a divine source that we are really going to receive true direction.

And I want to us to take some time and pray today. We're going to do this a couple times. And I would request that we certainly pray for direction. But I would request that we would pray for a sweet spirit in this house, the respect that we would show to fellow brothers and sisters.

Now I would like for us to form groups of two or three. We'll take three or four or five minutes. That's going to be time well spent. Let's recognize that our call upon Heaven for direction is a real resource for this church. And so as we enter into this time, let's do so with the seriousness and the appeal to Heaven to really guide and direct us.

So let's just take some time right now. At the end of that time, we will have a prayer. As I hear the group quieting down, I'm going to ask our secretary, Karen Porter, if she would pray as the group becomes quiet and end our session of prayer. Let's just find two or three people praying for that sweet spirit that will let us discuss this in the respect for each other that we know Heaven really desires. Let's separate now.

[Prayer.]

All right. Just thank you very much for taking that moment, and we'll do it again. We're going to take the time.

We, probably above many things in this church, believe in prayer. And what a joy. You can't imagine what peace it brings when I know that we're dealing with a group that has their anchor in prayer.

And we want to move on down through the sequence of events that we have on the agenda. We have voted, but I notice that at microphone 1 there is a point of order, and I'll take that.

Delmer Navallo Caro.

We are not taking comments at this time because we have not opened the floor, but I will recognize points of order. Yes, please.

DELMER NAVALLO CARO: Good morning, Mr. Chair. In order to speed up, I am kind of confused, because I asked yesterday a question regarding whether the GC session as we have today is the highest level of authority to make decisions, and the answer was yes.

Because of that, I recall that Pastor Wilson just told us that two times the motion to vote on women's ordination was turned down at this highest level.

My question is: As we heard the reports from some divisions, women have been ordained already. That means disobedience. Did they break—

MICHAEL RYAN: Can I interrupt you? What you are raising is really not a point of order. And if you want a clarification on the fact that the General Conference in session is the highest authority, we probably can provide a short explanation. But to get into a further debate, I am a little uncomfortable with that, so please state your point of order precisely.

DELMER NAVALLO CARO: We are making an administrative mistake, as far as I understand, because we didn't call this session properly. Because all the material I got, which I have here, on pages 66 and 67 it doesn't refer that women's ordination was appointed. And if we validate this, it doesn't matter if the outcome is going to be yes or no—we will be making a mistake. And I think we have to clear this up in order to go along with the meeting.

MICHAEL RYAN: OK. I appreciate that. I think a little bit of that is a point of order, and quite a bit of it is not. But I will ask if there is some help on an explanation that might help you.

Elder Wilson, do you want to make any comment about the General Conference in session—you have made that statement—being the highest authority. I think it will help this brother is it looks at the conflict of two previous actions versus the one today.

TED N. C. WILSON: Well, Brother Chair, simply from my understanding, the General Conference can take up items and review items. At our last General Conference session we heard, as I said, a request from the floor. We took that to our Steering Committee, which looks at the agenda items and the progress, and we came back with an assurance that we would look at a theology of ordination, which we did not have. We did not have a written document entitled Theology of Ordination. So that is what we have been working on over the past number of years—actually, during this past quinquennium. That brought us to the situation where a decision would need to be made regarding requests from different divisions or sentiments.

You know, the church is a dynamic and changing church, and so we have to respond to things. I, Brother Chair, do not feel in any way that we are out of order in doing what we're doing, but, of course, we will leave that to you and to the body. Thank you.

MICHAEL RYAN: Thank you very much.

All right. We're going to move on now. I'm sorry. I think we're going to move beyond this item if we can. I think we've had the point of explanation, and we'll move on with our sequenced program.

All right. I have another point of order on microphone 3, Roger Caderma.

ROGER CADERMA: Mr. Chairman, every time there is a translation, there is a delay because of the lack of a microphone. If possible, could we provide additional microphones in each area so that there would be no delay when there is translation?

MICHAEL RYAN: We will try to do our best to accommodate that and to slow down to make sure that that translation is not a problem. At this juncture it is impossible to add other microphones, so we'll try to keep that in mind. I appreciate the comment, because we truly do want those who need translation to hear and to be part of the discussion.

All right. We're going to move into a brief synopsis or review of the Theology of Ordination Study Committee and the past studies that have been done.

As you know, Dr. Stele is not only a vice president of the General Conference but also directs the Biblical Research Institute and has taken responsibility for this.

So, Dr. Stele, please give us this review.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you, Brother Chair. I would like, before giving a brief synopsis, to remind ourselves that we are all about mission. In *The Acts of the Apostles* I find the following quote: "The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men" [p. 9]. I hope you will not argue here that Ellen White meant here "humanity." "It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world" [p. 9].

So whatever we do, let it be done having mission in mind. I'm not aware of any other subject that has been studied for so long as the subject we are discussing today. In fact, the first small study

committee was established in 1881. Since then, many more commissions have been requested to study the issue. What unites most of these commissions is that most of them finished their work with the same request: “We need to study the subject more.”

However, the Theology of Ordination Study Committee established during this past quinquennium was not given this luxury to finish with the same request. Rather, we were given the task to study the theology of ordination; then, based on this theology of ordination, to study the implications, especially as they relate to women’s ordination. And if we were able to come up with a consensus, then to present the consensus to the Annual Council.

Then we were given the instruction by the body that organized us: if you are not able to come up with a consensus, you have to provide reports that present the views, but then concentrate on solutions, so that finally we can put an end to the discussion, stop all of the destruction, and return to the main task of our church: mission.

And so a worldwide study was established. Every division established a biblical research committee; and then the TOSC was established, a large committee; and the large committee was connected with bridges to every biblical research committee. From every biblical research committee, TOSC had two representatives, and so the information was going back and forth.

We started our study with the aim of achieving a consensus on the subject of theology of ordination.

And today I would like to give glory to God, I would like to praise His name, that in spite of all the differences in opinions, we were able to come up with a short document on the theology of ordination.

If one studies this document very carefully, it really provides the basis for how to move forward. I’m not going to go into the details, because it will be read. And please pay attention to many details that are there in this document. And I’m sure you have already read it.

Because this was the aim of the Theology Ordination Study Committee: to be open, transparent. And we have decided to put all of the papers, everything that was going on in TOSC, online, to make it

available to people; and so you could really participate with us, to read it, to discuss it, communicate with us.

And I'm sure you have read it, and you have received the final report that was sent to you electronically and also in hard copy.

This is why I will really make my statements very brief. Praise be to God, as I said, we were able to come up with a document, "Consensus Statement on a Seventh-day Adventist Theology of Ordination." Then we moved on, and we started to study the issue of women's ordination.

It was a challenging task. At times, no way out was envisioned. We were praying. We were studying. We were praying again and studying again.

And the result was we couldn't come with a consensus understanding and statement on the issue of women's ordination. In fact, we had three groups in the Theology of Ordination Study Committee almost equal in size that had different views. The synopsis of their views will be presented today, so I will not go into it.

But one thing I would like to say: All three groups are sincere, faithful Seventh-day Adventists. All three groups treasure the Scriptures. All three groups have tried to base it on Scripture. But unfortunately, different groups have interpreted some passages differently. But I would like us to respect all three groups.

We saw the sincerity, we saw the struggle, we saw the prayers, we saw the fasting, and yet there was no consensus.

Brothers and sisters, in some of my sleepless nights I was thinking and I was praying, "Lord, why couldn't we come up with a consensus?" Our pioneers struggled with many theological issues, but they came together. They struggled, they studied, they prayed, and then they came with a consensus. But we have not.

And I was wondering. And then I almost heard the following: Maybe you are asking the wrong question. Maybe, instead of asking who should be ordained, you should ask, "Lord, how can we recognize those that You have called so that we can ordain them?"

And then the Scripture provided enough evidence to discover the callings of God. As I said, we will hear the three different views. Then we concentrated on the solutions. We said, “We cannot come together on the understanding of the issue, but how now, with differences of opinions, how can we come together and, as one family, move forward?”

We tried it. We tried it hard.

We tested if we would agree all to move in one direction.

We have been a study committee and not a decision-making committee, and so we have not used the voting system. But how to discover if we have a consensus?

So we have to ask the people to take some kind of vote to discover it. Unfortunately, we have not discovered it, although groups 2 and 3, as you have seen in the card, have a similar solution. And had it been a decision-making committee, we would probably have made a decision. But since it was a study committee, we aimed at a consensus, which should be at least about 90 percent of support. We had more than 90 percent for the theology of ordination document, but the group committee couldn't achieve this goal for the solutions. And so we have three different documents, three understandings, and the three ways forward.

Dear brothers and sisters, we are here today not to determine winners and losers. Let us remember: In the family, there cannot be losers and winners. Either all are winning or all are losing.

Today we have a historical chance for all of us, for the whole family of God, to be winners and move forward in fulfilling the mission assigned to the church.

The alternative is not attractive at all. To be losers is not attractive. Either we all win or we all lose and move backward to the stage of arguing, debating, blaming, and losing precious time, while the world out there is dying without the knowledge of Jesus.

This issue has the potential to continuously distract us from the actual work we are called to. And so, dear sisters and brothers, the world out there is dying without the knowledge, without the Living Bread. Let us decide very quickly on the issue, and let us go about the mission of the church. Let us not disappoint our Father.

MICHAEL RYAN: Thank you, Dr. Stele. I'm sure that was not applause that we were hearing; it was something else. I appreciate that quick synopsis.

You know, it's possible that there would be quite a number here that maybe are not quite as familiar with the positions that he referenced, the three positions. And so rather than to read them in their entirety, each group that was advocating a position crafted a paper of a certain amount of words that takes approximately the same time to read.

And they have submitted that. And we plan to read a very short synopsis on each of those positions. And we're going to request the secretary to read those short synopses right now.

So, Karen Porter, please share with us those statements.

KAREN PORTER: These position statements have been prepared by the groups representing these positions, and we read them exactly as they were given to us. They will also be on your screen so that you can follow along.

[Reading of position statements.]

Mr. Chair, I recognize that it is not the business of this session to discuss or edit these position statements. They are for information only. Later on, we can enter into a discussion on them.

MICHAEL RYAN: Thank you very much. I appreciate that, Karen, the reading of that.

Now, we are familiar with the consensus statement that we want to embrace with this group, but I think a short review of that is in order also. You can see it on the program. And again I am going to turn to our secretary to read the "Consensus Statement of Seventh-day Adventist Theology of Ordination" as it was endorsed by the 2014 Annual Council.

KAREN PORTER: Mr. Chair, this is an action of the Annual Council, so it also requires no action by this body. And it is not the business of this session to discuss or edit this document as well. It comes by way of information. This item can also be found on pages 64 and 65 of your agenda notebook, if you wish to follow along there. It is also on the screen. [Reading.]

MICHAEL RYAN: Thank you very much, Karen, for reading that and reminding us. We're about to have an introduction to the question to be placed on the floor.

Before we do that, we want to take a little time to pray again. Probably the most important prayer life that we can have is the prayer life that we have ourselves. And I'm going to ask that we just take a moment and pray silently, pray yourself, and we'll take just a minute or two to ask the Lord to be here and to fill this room with His Spirit.

[Prayer.]

I'm going to now turn to the secretary of the General Conference, Dr. G. T. Ng, to read an introductory statement and place the question before the body.

G. T. NG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the invitation to read the 2014 statement. Mr. Chairman, my voice this morning is not exactly music to your ears. You still want me to read?

This is a statement as presented and approved by the 2014 Annual Council. This statement will be read for information and background knowledge only.

The title of the statement is "Theology and Practice of Ministerial Ordination."

[Reading.]

MICHAEL RYAN: Is there a second to that motion? I see a second.

Now, Dr. Ng, before you leave the microphone, you know there is going to be a question that needs to be answered very clearly and completely. The question is: If someone votes yes on this question, what does that mean? And if someone were to vote no, what does that mean? I want this to be very clear, so I encourage you not to go over it once, but maybe even a couple times.

G. T. NG: Yes, Mr. Chairman. "Yes" means the opposite of "no."

[Laughter.]

Mr. Chairman, yes means that the division executive committees are authorized by the world church, if they so desire, to ordain women to the gospel ministry within their own territory.

If the majority of the world church votes no, that means divisions are not authorized by the world church to ordain women to the gospel ministry in their territory.

It means the current church policy continues as it has been, and they are not to ordain women, and so the church will be together in this approach. That's my understanding of the yes and no implications.

MICHAEL RYAN: OK. Now, you said that yes is the opposite of no, and because of the quality of your voice, maybe people didn't understand you. We'll have you read this whole thing over again.

What do you think?

[Laughter.]

I thank you for that explanation. And I think unless there are questions that may come up later as to the clarification of that, I think it's quite clear if you vote yes on this question, the majority votes, then the world church has authorized divisions to organize and move forward with the ordination of women to the gospel ministry.

If we vote no on this question, the majority, then the world church has not authorized the ordination of women. So I think that's very clear.

So, now, I do see that we have a point of order on microphone 6. I'm going to recognize that. Foster Chiwanda, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

FOSTER CHIWANDA: Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for according me the opportunity to present this point of order.

I noticed that the motion is in the form of a question, and the motion sort of demands just two answers: yes or no.

Now, please, Mr. Chairman, bear with me. I take you to the *Rules of Order*, page 2. It reads here, "When Seventh-day Adventists meet to transact the business of the church, they are meeting with God. In the final analysis, it is the Holy Spirit who leads and guides."

MICHAEL RYAN: OK. Thank you very much. This, so far, is not a point of order.

FOSTER CHIWANDA: I'm coming to it. It's at the end.

MICHAEL RYAN: Very good.

FOSTER CHIWANDA: If I should be restricted to quote the basis for my point of order, then I better sit down.

MICHAEL RYAN: You have 15 seconds.

FOSTER CHIWANDA: I have what?

MICHAEL RYAN: Fifteen seconds—10 seconds left. OK. Very good. Thank you. I'll move to another point of order.

I just want to make mention of the fact that our main purpose is to get people behind the microphone as quickly as possible to say why they are in favor of this motion or why they are opposed to the motion. We can consume our time in points of order, and I think we should have them if they are really legitimate. So judge carefully. Let's try to respect the group if you have that opportunity to talk about that. OK?

We will go to the point of order on microphone 5. I believe that's from Henry Moncur, Inter-American Division.

HENRY MONCUR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just a quick observation, and you can correct me if I'm wrong. But I do not recall us voting today time in regard to the speeches. Now, I know we voted on Monday dealing with those specific issues on Monday, but I do not recall us voting it to be for the entire session. And so if there is a motion that needs to be in order for that, I would like to make that, but I do not recall us voting time today.

MICHAEL RYAN: OK. I thank you for that comment. I think it's the understanding of the chair and the parliamentarian that the action that we took was actually an action for two minutes for the whole time. Now, if it's not the understanding of the body, we can review that. But I think that's the understanding we're going with.

HENRY MONCUR: I believe that the action I saw that was taken on Monday said, "specifically for today," which was Monday. So you can check the minutes, but I believe it said "for today," which was Monday, when we voted that.

MICHAEL RYAN: We will check that. And if you are correct, then we certainly would encourage someone to make that motion, because we need to move through this as quickly as we can.

OK. Thank you for that, and I hope we can have that clarified. OK. There's another point of order on microphone 6. Onalenna Balapi.

ONALENNA BALAPI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My point of order is that the president, Dr. Ted, when he was giving the introduction, pleaded for time for the speakers. As such, I thought, we unanimously adopted to do away with the limit that we adopted on Monday. If that is not correct, please put me on the right track. But that's my understanding, so that two minutes is not decided as far as today is concerned. Thank you.

MICHAEL RYAN: OK. It's my understanding that it's two minutes. Unless that's challenged and we get the will of the body again, we're going to stay with two minutes.

OK. We have another point of order on microphone 6, Julian Huesca Murillo.

JULIAN HUESCA MURILLO [translated]: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Those of us who are in need of translation will take three minutes. Is that so?

MICHAEL RYAN: That is correct.

JULIAN HUESCA MURILLO [translated]: In three minutes, really we can only say ideas for a minute and a half, so it is still not fair.

MICHAEL RYAN: OK. I want to interrupt you. Again, just in respect to the house, we must keep the rules. And what you're mentioning now really is not a point of order. And I appreciate your comment.

The rules of the house are that we're going to have three minutes for those with translations. So that is the position that we're taking here. Thank you.

All right. I have got one more point of order, microphone 2, Jay Gallimore, North American Division.

JAY GALLIMORE: Yes, Brother Chairman, two points of order real quick.

I think that the rule for the house on the translation was made on a point of order. You can check that; your parliamentarian can help you with that. But I think that's a fair request.

Second, we were told from the very start that we would not be allowed to line up at the microphones until the chair told us that those microphones were open for comment, and that's already happening. So I'd like, for the fairness of the house, for the chair to help us with that, please.

MICHAEL RYAN: All right. I think you probably can appreciate the fact that we can make the announcement, but it is very difficult to enforce it from the chair. Again, we have not really called for the floor to be open yet. I know that we are not registering any cards yet. They are not being registered. So I would encourage you to abide by the announcements that we have made. OK. I think we've cleared up the points of order.

I do want to do everything we can to make sure that the translation is proper and that it's being understood. We want to carry the body with us. And I think that's a very legitimate thing, and we would do our best to do that.

Now, I was going to mention, before the points of order, that we are going to honor the two-minute limit and three minutes for translation.

And also, we need to understand that on the screen I will have a list of the names that want to address this issue. We are requesting those coming to the microphone; please inform the person at the screening whether they are speaking in favor of the motion or they are speaking against the motion, because we are going to alternate back and forth.

There will be a voice that speaks in favor of the motion, and then we will alternate to the next person on the list, regardless of how they are positioned in line, who has registered as a no vote. And so we'll alternate back and forth: yes, no, yes, no.

MICHAEL L. RYAN: Now, there is another option. You can tell them, "I have a point of inquiry," or "I want to make a comment without saying one way or the other."

Now, I will look at those, and we will take them from time to time. But I can tell you probably the majority of voices on the floor will be those who register to speak in favor of the motion or to speak against the motion.

And I would hope that we could get into this as quickly as possible without a lot more negotiating on points of order, because it's important. We have come here to express an opinion; we want to hear that.

And I do have another point of order on microphone 5. We are going to take that, but I would encourage you to keep those at a minimum unless it's on translation.

Armando Miranda, please, microphone 5.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This is a real point of order. There is a problem with the translation in Spanish. We need to be sure that everybody understands what is happening here, especially the delegates. So I would like to ask you to do something. We need to have a good translation for our brothers and sisters who speak Spanish and don't understand English.

MICHAEL RYAN: That is a legitimate point of order. We have been wrestling with this. We will do the very best we can. Those hearing my voice who are responsible for translation, and those who are in leadership in the Inter-American Division who can help provide people who can provide that translation, or other Spanish-speaking areas, please be available to be part of that solution. It is extremely important.

Thank you for that. We will try to make forward with that.

We have another point of order, Dr. Handysides, microphone 5, please.

ALLAN HANDYSIDES: Mr. Chairman, I heard you say we should indicate whether we are in favor of the motion or not; and I believe what we really should be saying is whether we are in favor of saying yes or in favor of saying no. The motion has been presented, and that is that we should take that vote.

MICHAEL RYAN: OK. The chairman and the body will be educated by that comment, and I think we can take that to heart. Thank you, Dr. Handysides. Very good.

I will now declare that the microphones are open for debate. And I would encourage the scanners to now register, and we will begin the list.

To begin as quickly as possible, I will take a positive in support of the motion from Raymond Hartwell, microphone 3, from the North American Division. You have two minutes.

RAYMOND HARTWELL (yes): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I respectfully ask all of us in God's world church how we should relate to the following questions. If, in 1911 in the Spirit of Prophecy, Ellen White, in *Review and Herald*, May 18, wrote, "In the city of Portland the Lord ordained me as His messenger, and here my first labors were given to the

cause of truth”; and if in *Testimonies*, volume 6, page 322, Ellen White wrote, “It is the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit of God that prepares workers, both men and women, to become pastors to the flock of God”; and if in *The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 161 and 162, Ellen White wrote, “Both Paul and Barnabas had already received their commission from God Himself, and the ceremony of the laying on of hands added no new grace or virtual qualification,” it was an acknowledged form of designation to an appointive office and a recognition of one’s authority in that office, “by it the seal of the church was set upon the work of God” [p. 162]; and if in Joel 2:22 and Joel 2:28 and 29 God’s word states, “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions, and also upon the servants and upon the handmaidens in those days will I pour out my spirit”; then we must ask ourselves, Is it possible God would have us recognize He is working through the daughters of the Adventist Church?

If our Adventist daughters are being called by the Holy Spirit in these last days to serve the cause of God through the gospel ministry, is it possible we are not honoring God by refusing to recognize the calling of God to the daughters of the Adventist Church and permit divisions to ordain?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MICHAEL RYAN: Thank you. I again would appeal to the body, including those who are observers, not to applaud. It sets a spirit that we have no interest in today. Let’s try to be respectful. Thank you very much.

I’ll go to a no vote that will be speaking from microphone 1 from the South American Division, Delmar Navallo Caro.

DELMAR NAVALLO CARO (no): Mr. Chairman, I’m against it, because I think that you didn’t respect my motion that we first have to deal with the disobedience of the ones that have ordained women before a decision is made at this GC session.

MICHAEL RYAN: All right. Thank you very much. We appreciate that comment.

We’ll now go back to a yes position. John Brunt from the North American Division, microphone 3.

JOHN BRUNT (yes): Many years ago I had a unique opportunity to have a short stint teaching pastors from several countries in the southern part of Africa. Nearby was a beautiful beach. And on hot days that beach was very inviting, but I never went to that beach, because I could not morally do it. It was a Whites-only beach at that time, and I could not go where my Black brothers and sisters could not go.

For the past 13 years I've pastored a church where I'm blessed to have a number of associate pastors; and I have worked with 19 associates: 14 men, five women. I have seen them work together. I've seen the Holy Spirit work through them in an equal way, although the five women have had more baptisms than the 14 men.

I know that these women are ordained by God for ministry. They aren't pushing for ordination. They just want to minister; they don't care what they're called. But I care, because my ministry being recognized, affirmed by the world church, in a way that theirs is not makes me feel the same kind of discomfort and uncleanness that I would have felt if I had gone to that beach.

In the early church, when they had a conflict of convictions—and this is a deep moral conviction for me—they achieved unity of mission by allowing for diversity of practice.

MICHAEL RYAN: Ten seconds.

JOHN BRUNT: They no longer required, but did not forbid, circumcision. If we are biblical, we will do the same and vote yes for mission in unity.

MICHAEL RYAN: Thank you very much. We appreciate your comment.

All right. Thank you.

We will now go to a point of order on microphone 2, Maria Lopez, North American Division.

MARIA LOPEZ: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

This is in regard to translation. I am an interpreter by profession. And I would like to suggest that when there is an interpreter who will be speaking, I believe it would facilitate things, would move things faster, if the interpreter can be at a different microphone than the person who's speaking, so that they won't be delayed in switching back and forth.

And I understand somebody already suggested to extend the time for translation, and it was denied. I understand that we want to move faster, but if you could please take that into consideration.

MICHAEL RYAN: OK. I think the first part of your comment was a good point of order. The last was out of order. We have an action. We're operating from the body. They have expressed themselves. Thank you very much for your comment.

All right. And those who have heard this, you can consider the first part of this.

All right. Let's move quickly. Where are we? On a yes vote? We are on no.

OK. I think we are ready for someone speaking against the motion. Microphone 1, Carlos Steger, South American Division.

CARLOS STEGER (no): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We all are very interested in the unity of the church. Christ prayed for the unity of the church in John 17. But I also find in John 17:17 that Jesus said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." And we cannot have unity if we are not united in truth.

The proposal that has been presented, if voted, would disunite the church, and we would not be united by the church. As I understand, the Bible is clear for me. To approve the ordination of women is not according to the Bible, and we will not abide by the truth as it is in God's Word. Thank you.

MICHAEL RYAN: OK. Thank you very much. We'll go to microphone 2, Ed Galan from the North American Division, speaking in favor of the motion.

ED GALAN: Elder Ryan, thank you for—

MICHAEL RYAN: Excuse me; I'm going to mention it every time. Please do not applaud when you have someone who may present the point of view that you support. Seriously. We want a spirit that has respect for the body. Please.

Continue. I'm sorry.

ED GALAN (yes): Elder Ryan, thank you.

We've asked for the Holy Spirit, but we also have to pray for you as a chair, and you have a big task front of you today.

I was told that we could vote yes or no or undecided. And so I'm in favor of voting an up-or-down situation here for the motion, the way we have been doing.

And I wanted to make remarks, though—remarks that we have made during the delegates session previously, when we talked about getting some form of a General Conference-defined generally accepted definition of words. Words mean lots of things to lots of people.

And if we had a glossary, if we had something to work with to help better understand— We're supposed to even be waiting, still, I believe on a working definition of what a pastor is, what a minister is.

Many conferences—or many divisions, rather—in the world have different notions of what a license is, a credential, an appointment, and a commission, things like this. These are things. I need to hear the debate today, and we need to be in consensus.

I'm appealing that we get a glossary, a terminology glossary, in our manual that's consistent for our bylaws, our constitution, and for any other working documents of the church. Otherwise, we're going to have differences of opinion just because of that.

Thank you, sir.

MICHAEL RYAN: Thank you very much. I appreciate that comment. I want to make one thing very clear: There's a little misunderstanding. When it comes time for voting, there will not be an option for undecided. We will vote yes, or we will vote no.

Where the distinction is on “undecided,” or “I” for a point of interest, is when you register at the microphone. And I have a number of those that are listed here. I'm seeing them. But the voting will be yes or no.

We'll go to microphone 4, Frank Hasel, Inter-European Division.

FRANK HASEL (no): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In light of the far-reaching implications of the issue before us, I trust that the leadership of our church will deal with the issue of women's ordination with prudence. And I strongly desire that all of us show the wisdom not to treat this issue as if it were a pillar of our faith or a fundamental belief.

It never has been in the past, it is not now, and it should not be made into one in the future.

Now, having said this, I would like to address the following aspect. The discussions at the TOSC meetings, of which I was a member, have made it sufficiently clear that the supporters of women's ordination to pastoral ministry and those who support that women should not serve in such a capacity both based their reasoning not on culture but on Scripture.

Now, Mr. Chairman, if this is the case, how do we effectively preserve the rights of those who, for conscientious reasons, do not support the ordination of women to ministry? If divisions are permitted to make provisions for the ordination of women to the gospel ministry as they deem it appropriate, what do we, for all practical purposes, do with those local churches and church members who, for conscientious reasons, cannot support such a decision? Will they be forced to transport their membership to another SDA church or conference?

MICHAEL RYAN: Ten seconds.

FRANK HASEL: It seems that no one has a conscientious objection when a male pastor serves their church, but some among us do feel not free to have a female pastor. So how do we protect their freedom?

MICHAEL RYAN: Very good. Thank you. I appreciate that comment.

We will now move to microphone 3, Larry Geraty, North American Division.

LARRY GERATY (yes): Thank you.

I belong to a missionary family. When I taught at the seminary at Andrews, I taught on all the continents except Antarctica, so I am familiar with the international church and see it as a real strength.

I'm thrilled that missionaries from the NAD are no longer needed in the same numbers as before. We have learned here that the so-called mission fields now comprise 90 percent of Adventist membership. Now, here in the U.S., we need you as missionaries to help us with church growth.

Those of you in the global south know, I'm sure, that if you have ordained men, you have already accommodated to modern custom without biblical authority, because there is no biblical basis for ordination as we practice it.

So for the sake of our evangelism and nurture in North America, Europe, and Australia, we appeal to you to allow us in our divisions to recognize by ordination our women too who have been called by God and are serving effectively in ministry.

We understand why many of you may not wish to do so in your divisions, and we have no burden to force you to do anything. In the global north, the majority believe in inclusivity and see inclusion of women called by God as a matter of justice, as well as in harmony with fundamental belief 14, which says, “In Christ . . . distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us.”

And you know the Bible texts in Joel and Galatians about women. So we appeal to you not to force us against our consciences. There are many examples of the global north being willing to accommodate customs of the global south in our worldwide church for the sake of mutuality, compassion, and unity. We now respectfully request the same graciousness on your part.

Thank you.

MICHAEL RYAN: Thank you. Thank you very much.

We're going to move to microphone 1. And I'm afraid if I try to pronounce your name you won't recognize it, so I would ask you please to introduce yourself. Step forward.

SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am Nwadike Uchechukwu from the West-Central Africa Division.

MICHAEL RYAN: I apologize. Thank you.

NWADIKE UCHECHUKWU (no): I want to thank God for what He has done and has continued to do for His church. The Bible tells us that God does not change. The Bible tells us that God is omniscient. He knows the beginning from the end, and He knows the end from the beginning. He also knows that this church would come to this point at this time in our history, and God can never lead us away from the truth.

And so Jesus is the truth, the way, and the life. If Jesus is the truth, He practiced the truth, He did the truth, He told us the truth. And so if Jesus is the truth and did not ordain any woman to the gospel ministry and that is the truth, we should follow the truth, and it shall be well with the church.

Thank you so much.

MICHAEL RYAN: Thank you very much. I appreciate that. I would encourage you not to applaud, please.

I'm going to move to one of the I's that are a point of interest and are not for it or against it, and that will be on microphone 6, Maxwell Muvwimi, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

MAXWELL MUVWIMI: Mr. Chairman, I have a problem with the motion. It doesn't seem to me to be very clear.

"Is it acceptable for division executive committees?"

Now, under the divisions we have unions and conferences and missions. There is the possibility that someone at a lower level may say, "I am not a division, and so I can do what I feel is right for my conference," and, hence, we may experience the same challenges that probably we may have experienced in the past. Because sessions have sat and they have made recommendations that were not honored in some parts of the world.

So I would love, Mr. Chairman, to seek a clarity if the motion would be a little more narrowed down to even lower entities so that when the vote is taken, it's taken from a mission, conference, union, up to the division level. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MICHAEL RYAN: All right, I thank you for that comment. And, you know, the chair is under certain obligations here, and there are approximately 2,500 people who know that. The motion comes from the General Conference Executive Committee. And, of course, the body has moved that and seconded it; it's the point under discussion. And this has gone through a lot of study.

I realize the sensitivities that you have mentioned, but I think we're going to have to deal with the question that's on the floor. And that may be narrowing down a point that will need to be addressed by a different group.

G. T. NG: Can I make a word of clarification?

MICHAEL RYAN: Yes. There is a word of clarification that we can provide you. Yes.

Dr. Ng.

G. T. NG: Mr. Chairman, we are one church, even though, as a division, you may have some unions that think or decide otherwise. But as a church, we have only one policy. We move in the same direction.

So if unions were to be divisive in their approach by not acting and thinking along with the division, then we have a problem. The problem is one of unity. So we are appealing to the world church to move in concert with each other and not act independently and unilaterally. Thank you.

MICHAEL RYAN: Thank you for that further clarification. I was speaking to the ability to change the motion; he is speaking to the very solid rationale that follows that.

All right. I recognize the time. If you look at your wristwatch, you will see that it's time that we break. The list that I have before me will not be lost. It will remain in the same order.

Before I call for the benediction and the prayer for our break, I want to encourage Bradford Newton, who is the next person to speak with a yes, and Mario Galioso with a no; also, Marc Woodson, who will be speaking in favor of the motion, and Doug Batchelor, who will be speaking against the motion, I would encourage you to be here a few minutes early so that it does not delay the beginning of the session. We will start promptly at 2:00.

Yes. If someone is not here, then you will need to queue again.

All right. We have one announcement before we break. If we could just have everyone stand still for a few moments, we will be dismissed in just seconds. Please.

KAREN PORTER: After lunch, delegate badges will be checked at the entrance to the delegate seating sections. Those with badges that say "delegate" or "family" will be admitted for seating in the delegate area. Those with badges that say "special guest" or any other designation are invited to be seated in the area reserved for special guests or retirees and missionaries behind the delegate seating area. Delegates who wish to sit with family members may find their assigned delegate area full unless they

arrive early. If that is the case, they are also invited to be seated in the special guests or retirees and missionaries' area.

Provision will be made for delegates seated in the special guests and retirees and missionaries sections to vote.

Should a delegate seated in these areas wish to speak, the delegate should come forward to the microphones in the delegate areas.

For everyone's safety, all delegates are reminded not to move chairs in the floor area because of the safety requirements established by the fire marshal of the City of San Antonio.

Thank you.

MICHAEL RYAN: All right. Just before the benediction, I will make mention of appreciation to the body for the spirit that we've had this morning. Thank you very much. And as we break, I just would ask that you would keep a prayer in your heart that that sweet spirit will stay among us.

I would invite you to stand for the benediction. William Winston from the North American Division will provide our benediction.

WILLIAM WINSTON: Let us pray.

[Prayer.]