

SECOND BUSINESS MEETING

Sixtieth General Conference session, July 2, 2015, 4:28 p.m.

DENNIS SAND: Our dear heavenly Father, I want to thank You for the opportunity You give us to be here together as one church. Lord, You have brought us from many places of the world, and You have a purpose, and we have a mission. As we meet this afternoon to deal with the business of Your church, help us to keep us focused; help us to remember the mission that You have given us; and help us, Father, to be united as one body. We want to finish the work that You have given us, and we want to go home soon to live with You forever. Be the leader of this meeting, Father. We ask all this in the precious and glorious name of Jesus. Amen.

Please be seated.

[Song.]

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you for that fine music. We are really treated here at the General Conference session with wonderful musicians from all around the world.

Well, the caucuses have finished their work, and in just a few moments we will see the results of those caucuses. But before I do that, I just want you give you a little report on our voting devices. Our technicians believe they have solved the problem. There are three issues that affected the voting. One was that the Wi-Fi signals in this room were too strong. They were very strong and overpowered the signals for the voting machines. And so they have adjusted that, and we believe that that will help, so that the signals coming from each of your individual devices will be recorded.

The second problem is that they were able to get into the computers and see that we actually had more people voting than what showed on the screen. However, a number of you were pressing the wrong buttons. You can press only 1 or 2, that's all. If you press a different button, it's not going to register, and you will be left out from the process.

So, please, I appeal to you again: When it comes to time to vote, press only 1 or 2. 1 for yes, 2 for no.

Third, because of the translation that was taking place, some of the folks here were listening for the translation of what we were voting on, and so their vote came in a little late, so we are going to increase the time period by which the votes can actually be registered. But I urge you to vote as soon as you can. As soon as the voting period is ready, do your vote so that there's adequate time for it to transmit into the computer system and record your vote.

So remember those three items. And we're going to take one practice vote right now so that our technicians can see how it works.

Now, the question I'm going to have you vote on is: Do you speak English? If you speak English—just wait, now. Don't vote yet. Wait until we tell you or till you see the countdown clock begin running.

And when you vote, if you speak English, yes is number 1, no is number 2. OK, you understand the question?

OK. Let's start the clock.

OK. Now you can vote. And I've just been informed to tell you that don't hold the button down continuously. Just press it good and strong and then release it. That will help the machine not get confused.

OK, we're about 14 seconds remaining, 10 seconds. Make sure your votes are recorded.

OK. We have a good, large majority that speak English, 20 percent that do not speak English, and those are the ones for which we want to make sure that they have translation and have the time to get their votes recorded.

OK. Very good. Does that look satisfactory to you folks in the technical area? I'm assuming it does.

OK. We have someone waiting to speak at mike 5. Mike 1, I guess.

LARRY BOGGESS: I can yield to mike 5.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: You're mike 5.

LARRY BOGGESS: Am I 5?

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Now you are.

LARRY BOGGESS: Out of 1,800 votes or so, this does not seem to be adequate. The thing showed only 700.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: The problem is that I don't think we have a full complement, as we had this morning. Not everyone is back in the room. That may be one factor. But I don't know. I'm going to leave it to the experts here to make a judgment on that.

LARRY BOGGESS: I think that the credibility of the whole system right now is questionable, and so I don't know how we will solve it. But it doesn't seem like we can rely upon saying that everybody that voted voted at this time.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Thank you for that comment. I see one of the technicians indicating that it seemed to work OK. And so we will try this again when it comes time to vote on—

OK. Mike 7. We have Chiwanda Foster.

CHIWANDA FOSTER: I just wanted to note that at first we are taught that this item would blink when we press the number that we choose. But it only flashed once, and then never at all this time. So I wonder if the technicians—

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Is that acceptable?

CHIWANDA FOSTER: —would look at that.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: The people tell me that that is acceptable, that it doesn't have to blink repeatedly.

CHIWANDA FOSTER: OK.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Yes. Let's take Mabio here, who is going to explain it.

MABIO NETO: On the original explanation this morning, people got the impression that it had to blink without stopping. It blinks just once and very quick. Sometimes you may not even notice. But that's OK. Once it blinks, it goes dark. That means your vote was computed, and that's what you have to see. Even if you don't see it blink, because you're not looking for that second when it's computed, you may still have certainty that your vote was computed when the display shuts down.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Thank you for that.

OK. We have another person at mike 7. Mathonsi.

QEDUMUSA MATHONSI: Mr. Chairman, I note that this morning we've been struggling with the issue of the device, and I consider that most of the issues that are going to be voted here are issues of conscience and grave importance. So I wonder that if we still have confidence in the system. If I had a choice, I would move a vote of "no confidence" on the voting system.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: I appreciate that concern. I think we need to give it just a little more time, because we have issues that come up early here that are not matters so much of conscience. Let's see how it works out, and the technicians here will keep monitoring the situation, and we'll see.

Thomas Mueller, TED, mike 7.

THOMAS MUELLER: Thank you. I think we need some clarification on the process. Two speakers ago a person spoke up, said it doesn't need to blink, which we heard this morning. Who was that speaking? Was that somebody with technical information who knows what the system is all about?

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Yes. That's the chief computer or Internet security officer for the General Conference.

THOMAS MUELLER: Thank you. Just to clarify, if I press my button and press 1 and after a few seconds it goes blank—

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: That's OK.

THOMAS MUELLER: —then my vote is processed?

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Yes.

THOMAS MUELLER: It doesn't need to blink?

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: It doesn't need to blink.

THOMAS MUELLER: Thank you for that clarification.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Yes. OK.

Onaolapo Ajibade, mike 4.

ONAOLAPO AJIBADE: To ascertain the accuracy of the device, is it possible to test it, using a motion, using the device, and then use the voting card, and count the voting cards and see whether it will tally with the device? Then we can be sure that the device is working.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: We will take that into consideration, but we won't do it at this session because we have one main agenda item that we need to accomplish. And if we need more practice of that kind, we would probably do it tomorrow.

We have Klaus Popa.

KLAUS POPA: I just wanted to reinforce what the brother mentioned. The issue of confidence is settled if we can check the machine and the manual vote. Then we will gain that confidence that is needed in the system. Thank you.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Yes. We'll consider that, and I'll refer that to the folks to see if that's something we should do.

OK. We have Ramiro Cano, mike 5.

RAMIRO CANO: Mr. Chairman, I affirm what has already been said. Until a reconciliation is done between hand and machine, or manual and machine, it will cast a shadow on all of the actions that will be taken henceforth. So whether it's done today, right now, or tomorrow, it needs to be done quickly,

so that we can all have the confidence of the process. We don't want any doubt to be cast or any shadow to be cast on the process.

One suggestion might be that if each individual stands up and each division counts how many units are being voted on, you can do a test run, and then each division can have a counter and bring it here and tally the votes. That's just a suggestion.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you very much.

Maurice Valentine.

MAURICE VALENTINE: Mr. Chair.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Yes?

MAURICE VALENTINE: I would like to suggest another possible remedy.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK.

SPEAKER: It might be that if we counted each individual that came on the floor and then added a third vote for abstain, we would be able to register every single individual that is here as a delegate as either having voted in the affirmative, the negative, or having abstained from the vote, based on the count of individuals that are on the floor as we enter into this arena. Again, just a suggestion.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you. Thank you for that.

Jonathan Duffy.

JONATHAN DUFFY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would suggest that if we did another test, we ask everyone who is eligible to vote to stand up and push their button. If it flashes and goes blank, then they sit down. If it doesn't respond to the vote, then they stay standing. And that would be a very quick way for us to get a visual count as to whether or not it is all OK.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Thank you. We'll consider that one as well.

Julio Mendez.

JULIO MENDEZ: Mr. Chairman.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Yes.

JULIO MENDEZ: We have already tested the electronic voting, and we have tried the manual voting this morning. To save time, Mr. Chairman, why don't we go ahead with all of our agenda items and use the manual voting? Maybe tomorrow, when the technician would be able to check this and build a good result, then we'll go to the electronic voting.

So, Mr. Chairman, I still would like to suggest that we use the manual voting to save time.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Thank you.

Guizar Flores, mike 7.

GUIZAR FLORES [through a translator]: We could take a group that will take a vote before testing the device. For example, in a group that has 50 persons, 40 of them will vote yes, 10 of them will vote no. Then once we know how the device should render the result, we can test the device, and that way we can ascertain that the device is working. Thank you.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: I'd like to say that we need to move on, and so I don't want to recognize any more after this one last speaker, Louis Torres, and we're going to move on to the main business of this session. OK, Louis?

GUIZAR FLORES: My motion was going to be to move on with the business at hand.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you.

GUIZAR FLORES: And if you don't need a motion, then move on. If you need the motion, you have got a motion.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you. I think we can move forward.

OK. We've gathered here now with the results of the caucuses. And the people in Secretariat have the names put on the screen. And you'll have a chance to read down through those names from the various divisions, and then we will take a motion to approve this group as the Nominating Committee. So just take a few moments to review these names as they're paged through.

OK. I have one—first of all, let's get the motion on the floor. Is there a motion to approve this list of names as the Nominating Committee?

It's moved.

Is there a second?

Yes. I hear a second.

OK. I have a person, Gina Brown, at mike 9.

GINA BROWN: Mr. Chairman, my question is the gender breakdown of the committee.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. From seeing it for the first time, you couldn't actually determine that. I don't know if anyone from Secretariat is able to do that.

GINA BROWN: Can we have that gender breakdown before we take a final vote? I think it's important and paramount to the situation that we have at hand.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK.

[Mild applause.]

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: You're working on that? OK.

Megan Mole.

MEGAN MOLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Yes.

MEGAN MOLE: I would like to second the request to know what the gender breakdown is. But I'd also be very interested to know what the age breakdown is, if that information is possible, because I'm concerned that, in addition to, you know, the 6 percent—or the 10 percent—of us under 40, there might be even fewer than that on the Nominating Committee. So if possible.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Thank you.

Cecil Perry.

CECIL PERRY: Yes, sir. I should make an observation. I don't know if this conference has taken into account those who may have some visibility problem in reading from the screen, and maybe this conference is slightly unfriendly to those who are elderly, not only with the long walks and no provision, but maybe for other things. I have been unable to read those names, and because there are 300, I have this disadvantage. What's your response?

[Mild laughter and applause.]

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: I don't know if the font can be enlarged or if that's—

CECIL PERRY: Even the font, the boldness of it is not—maybe the lights somewhat affect the print.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: I don't know that I'm in a position to answer all of the questions you have.

CECIL PERRY: But at least you can answer one.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Yes. I'm going to try.

[Laughter.]

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: I'm looking at my colleagues here in Secretariat to see if they can help us out.

CECIL PERRY: It's a little better. If I move from where I'm sitting and sit under the screen.

[Laughter.]

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. We can enlarge it. Can you—

CECIL PERRY: OK. my friend. That's better. That's better.

[Laughter.]

At least you answered one.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Yes.

[Laughter.]

Julio Mendez.

JULIO MENDEZ: Mr. Chairman, I'm suggesting to the Secretariat that if you take time for the Secretariat to segregate who are men and women, who are old and young, maybe we would request the representatives coming from the different divisions and organizations who will compose the Nominating Committee just to stand. And then we will identify how many men and how many women, and we can also identify whether they are young or once young, and then we will know the composition of the Nominating Committee.

That's my suggestion, Mr. Chair.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you. I do have some numbers here for you; and that is that there are 218 male members of the proposed Nominating Committee and 34 female members of the Nominating Committee, for a total of 252.

And I don't know about the ages. Maybe not everyone wants their age revealed.

So maybe we can't even actually give the ages, because in some cases there are legal issues involved.

You're working on it? OK. Good. We can have categories, at least. Thank you.

OK. Michael Ray Jamieson, mike 10.

MICHAEL RAY JAMIESON: It seems that it would be appropriate to have this list read for those who are having difficulty reading it.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. OK, we have the age numbers here. Five are under 30. Ten are between 30 and 39; 63 are between 40 and 49. One hundred two are between 50 and 59. Six are 70-plus. Sixty-six are in their 60s.

OK. Ray Hartwell.

RAY HARTWELL: Mr. Chairman?

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Yes.

RAY HARTWELL: There was no constitutional or bylaw provision mandating any kind of age or gender in regard to the makeup of the Nominating Committee. So while I'm very sympathetic—very sympathetic—to the issue that was raised, I do believe that there was nothing given to the caucuses to guide them that they needed to have a specific age or gender.

Henceforth, Mr. Chairman, I move the previous question.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: We have a second. OK. That kind of a motion does not allow for discussion, and so we must go directly to the vote, moving the previous question.

That means that we cease debate and discussion. And if you vote in favor of this motion, we must go to the actual vote on the motion before us at hand.

This motion is to determine if you want to close debate.

OK. Let's try the voting devices. If you are in favor of the closing of debate, please indicate by pressing number 1 at the proper time. And if you do not want to close debate, press number 2.

We are about ready. We'll see the time clock begin.

You can now vote.

You have 20 seconds yet to finish voting.

Time is about up.

OK. Yes. We have more people voting this time, 962 versus 71. So we are closing debate. And we will vote on the original motion to accept the names that have been presented before us as members of the Nominating Committee. OK. Let's prepare to vote on that one.

If you support the names that you saw on the list, press number 1. If you object to those names, press number 2.

OK. The countdown clock is working. You can vote.

Twenty seconds left.

Five seconds left.

OK. The vast majority are in favor of, and so I declare the motion passed.

Now I want to give some instructions to those who are members of the Nominating Committee. Please listen carefully. If your name is on that list and you're a member of the Nominating Committee, as soon as we adjourn this session, you need to go to room KL, which is in the back corner to my left, your right. And that is the room where the Nominating Committee will do its work, and you need to go there for some preliminary information.

And then again at 9:00 p.m., after the evening program, there will be an organizational meeting for those of you who are members of the Nominating Committee. So please remember those two times. As soon as we adjourn, go to that room, and again at 9:00 p.m. You will have an organizational meeting so that you can get started tomorrow morning.

OK. I believe that ends our agenda for this afternoon. I thank you for all your participation, and we would like to close this meeting with a benediction.

I invite Shoku Tsuji to come from NSD to offer our benediction. Let us stand.

SHOKU TSUJI: Let us all stand for prayer.

[Praying in native language.]

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you. Have a good supper, and please be back here for the evening program. You won't want to miss it.

[End of afternoon session.]