

THIRD BUSINESS MEETING

Sixtieth General Conference session, July 3, 2015, 9:23 a.m.

PARDON MWANSA: You can now take your seats. We will have the blessings of music and opening prayer. I invite you at this time, please, to take your seats, as we receive the blessings of lovely music and prayer. Please let's take our seats.

[Music.]

PATRICIA PAPU: After that powerful, timely message and song, shall we all rise as we pray.

Our gracious heavenly Father, hallowed be Thy name. King of glory, we exalt Your holy name, thanking You, Lord, for the gift of life, thanking You, Lord, for the grace, Your grace ever sufficient to us. Thank You, Lord, for the blessing of Your Word we have received this morning. As we begin with Your business of this day, we pray that Holy Spirit will be our constant companion, be our affirming strength, and our abiding presence. We pray for our leaders. Bless them, Lord, with the Holy Spirit as they handle Your work. In Jesus' name, amen.

PARDON MWANSA: May I take this time to welcome each and every one of you to our second day of business and spiritual worship. Those of you that were privileged to be here yesterday in the morning starting with our spiritual food that we were fed through the sermon would agree with me that we were fed and we were blessed.

As we progressed in the day, the Lord led us with His presence, and we had the privilege of listening to the vibrant report, very informative report, that our president, Elder Ted Wilson, gave last night. With that, we are looking forward to a great day under the guidance of the Holy Spirit this morning.

With me up here in front to lead us out in the activities of the session is Todd McFarland, our parliamentarian; and to my left is John Thomas, our associate secretary; and Tami Boward, who is helping us out here in front.

Our morning session will take us to 12:00 noon. In between now and that time, we hope to clear at least three items, and that will include item 135, which is the executive secretary's report. We also will attempt to clear item 136, which is the statistical report, also led by Elder G. T. Ng and David Trim. Then we will attempt to deal with agenda item 137, which is the treasurer's report.

I would like to remind those that are responsible for material distribution from divisions to find your way to where you are supposed to collect material and distribute it as arranged. Note that assignment so that you are able to ensure that when items are dealt with, the delegates seated in your area do have the appropriate accompanying material, backup material.

With these preliminaries, let me see if I can take you to yesterday's struggle in trying to ascertain whether we can use our electronic gadgets for voting.

I would like us to spend some moments at this time to go back to that exercise so that we will determine if we will use our electronic gadgets for voting or if we will use our cards.

To lead us into that, I would like to invite our chief legal counsel, Karnik, to lead us in testing the electronic gadget.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: Good morning, everyone.

Yesterday when I stood before you, we talked about security, we talked about privacy. Yet all of that doesn't count much if the devices don't work. So this morning we will try something different. The technical issues we experienced yesterday have caused us to make some modifications, including adding more access points so that the voting can be collected more quickly. The technical staff are confident that the modifications that they've made will correct the difficulties we experienced yesterday. But just to make sure, we are going to follow a process to gain a greater sense of confidence in the electronic voting system. And so this morning we will do both an electronic vote and a hand count at the same time so that we can determine the total number of votes cast, and we can compare.

I would like at this time for the delegates who are here present with their voting devices to be prepared to vote. You must have been a delegate in the seating area in order to vote. It doesn't matter whether you push button 1A or 2B. We are going to count all of the votes regardless. All we are trying to do is determine how many votes will be cast.

Each division has been requested to appoint someone or a couple of individuals to count the individuals in their division.

The comparison between the two vote totals may show some variance, but it's a dynamic situation with people coming and going. And so we want to make sure, if you are participating in the vote, that you are in your division territory within the delegate area.

At the appropriate time, please take out your voting device and push button 1A or 2B. Press it firmly and press it only once. We will be counting the total number of votes cast.

At this point I would ask those that are going to be counting on behalf of each division to stand in the aisles.

PARDON MWANSA: And it might be important for us to go to your designated areas as delegates. If you are standing somewhere around, please quickly find your way to your designated place, wherever you are supposed to be. Find your way there at this time.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: Some of you yesterday were using numbers other than 1 or 2. Those, in normal votes, will not count. But today we will be counting every single vote that is cast. And so regardless of which number you push, the totals will be tallied and displayed on the screen. At this point, I would ask all of the delegates with voting devices to please stand.

I would like you to raise your hands with the voting device in your hands and hold them there until the count is completed.

Please, if you are just entering the counting area, do not be included in the count. If you are just entering the counting area, please do not be included in the count. If you have not stood to be counted, please do not use the electronic voting device to vote.

Once those that are counting on behalf of each division have your numbers, please come to the front area of Secretariat and give your numbers to Myron Iseminger.

PARDON MWANSA: The leaders of each group, after you are finished counting, please come up to the front to where Myron is and submit your total from your area.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: Please do not sit down until after we have taken the electronic vote. If you are part of the manual count, please remain standing.

PARDON MWANSA: If you've been counted while standing, you don't have to continue lifting your device. You can just drop it back and keep standing.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: All right. Are we done with the manual count?

PARDON MWANSA: We are waiting to make sure that those who are responsible for counting in different locations have all reported to Myron and the numbers are being added. We are waiting for that to take place. Keep standing, as you will be given the next instruction after the reports of numbers have been submitted to Myron.

From the front, we will get a signal from Myron as to when reports of numbers have been submitted to you.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: All right. I think we are ready to proceed with the electronic vote, so please take out your—

No? I guess not.

PARDON MWANSA: Following the counting, you will receive specific instructions.

At this point, when the signal comes to us from those working on the figures, you will receive specific instructions reviewing how you are expected to vote using the electronic gadget in your hand.

That will be to make sure that we maximize on ascertaining what it is we want to ascertain.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: OK. We are ready to vote electronically.

Yes?

PARDON MWANSA: South America is on their way.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: OK. Are we ready to vote? I'm going to give you instructions on how to vote.

PARDON MWANSA: OK. So far the count of delegates who stood up with voting electronic gadgets as reported to those responsible is 1,701, as displayed on the screen.

Now, listen to the next instructions Karnik will outline to us.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: As soon as we give the signal to go ahead and vote, please push button 1A or 2B. Only those two buttons. Push the button only once and let it go. Vote quick. Do not hold on to the button. Remember, if the light comes on and blinks or turns off, your vote has counted. Don't worry that your machine has turned off. Don't keep pushing the button more than once.

Are we ready to vote?

Let's start the timer and start voting, please.

Push button 1A or 2B. Please vote now.

Once you have voted, feel free to sit down.

PARDON MWANSA: OK. The total of everything displayed comes to 1,098. We counted 1,701.

At this point, I think it is safe for us to proceed and use the green voting cards and not the electronic, at least for this morning, until further tests are done.

With that, may I at this time invite you get back to the spiritual business that we are trying to transact. Thank you so much, Karnik, for your help.

Yesterday there was an item that was referred to the Steering Committee that had to do with a two-thirds voting requirement regarding changes in the fundamental beliefs. The Steering Committee is looking at that item. And at an appropriate time, which is likely to be on Sunday, they will bring back a report.

OK. I see that we have a point of order on microphone 2. Microphone 2 is right here. Elder Jackson.

DANIEL JACKSON: When the direction was given to vote, the machine did not appear to have started. And I think it may be worth another try, even though I don't wish to delay. But I think there were many who voted before the counter started.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you, Elder Jackson. We will try that in the afternoon if we need to. But at this time we will proceed with the green card vote this morning.

And I see a point of order. Microphone 2, please.

JIM HOWARD: Yes, this is not a point of order. But during yesterday's business relating to the fundamental beliefs, it was said that this issue was going to be brought back on Sunday. I just wanted to speak to that, because I do believe that the fundamental beliefs are a uniting aspect of our work here, and that it is very important that we be able to address the two-thirds vote.

I believe that the reason that it was sent back was that it was thought that the Executive Committee would deal with something of that nature. And it's my understanding, according to the constitution and bylaws, that while in session we are the Executive Committee, that the Executive Committee acts only between sessions, but during the time when this body is in session, we have authority to act on those matters.

So here we are discussing things that we know are going to be a threat to our unity, and I believe it's very important that we avoid, for example, a 51 percent vote to change our fundamental beliefs, so that what was intended to unite us ends up splitting us down the middle.

So in light of the fact that this body is serving as the Executive Committee during the time that it is in session, I'd like to make a motion that we do—

PARDON MWANSA: Jim?

JIM HOWARD: Yes?

PARDON MWANSA: Before you make a motion, may I make one clarification that would help you?

JIM HOWARD: Yes.

PARDON MWANSA: Keep in mind that by postponing it to Sunday, we are not saying this body will not decide or will not get a full report and be engaged in what will be the mode of transacting on that particular issue.

The reason for postponing it to Sunday is that the Steering Committee has engaged certain people to do a search on this item so that when it comes back to this floor there will be information that will help us determine how to go. So if it is OK, our not managing it today is not to say we will not have it come to the floor, but it's simply to say we are not managing it at this time. With that, I think we can then proceed.

JIM HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. I appreciate your cooperation on that.

So at this time I would like to invite G. T. Ng to lead us in agenda item 135, which is the executive secretary's report.

G. T., please.

G. T. NG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, everyone. What a pleasure it is to participate in the General Conference session, and this morning we have the privilege of introducing to you an outstanding team of secretaries, both at the General Conference as well as in the world divisions.

First of all, I'd like to introduce to you, on my right, the undersecretary of the General Conference, Pastor Myron Iseminger.

Next is Dr. Rosa Banks, associate secretary of the General Conference, with specific responsibility to the East-Central Africa Division, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, and West-Central Africa Division.

Next to him is Alex Bryant, associate secretary of the General Conference, as well as the secretary of the North American Division.

Next is Pastor Agustin Galicia, associate secretary of the General Conference with special responsibility to the Euro-Asia Division, South American Division, Inter-American Division, and Southern Asia Division.

Next is Pastor Gary Krause, associate secretary of the General Conference, as well as the director of the Adventist mission at the General Conference.

Next is Karen Porter, associate secretary of the General Conference, as well as codirector of IPRS and deferred medical appointment coordinator.

Next is John Thomas, associate secretary of the General Conference, as well as the director of Adventist Volunteer Services.

Next is Harald Wollan, associate secretary of the General Conference with special responsibility to the Inter-European Division, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, and Trans-European Division.

Then we go to the division secretaries. The first one I will introduce on my right is Pastor Nathaniel Walembe, the secretary of East-Central Africa Division.

Next to him is Volodymyr Krupskyi, the secretary of the Euro-Asia Division.

Next to him is Gabriel Maurer, the secretary of the Inter-European Division.

Next to him is Elie Henry, secretary of the Inter-American Division.

Next to him is Alex Bryant, who appears for the second time, the secretary of the North American Division.

Next to him, Akeri Suzuki, secretary of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division.

Next to him, Magdiel Perez Schulz, secretary of the South American Division.

Then we have Solomon Maphosa, secretary of the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

Then we have Lionel Smith, secretary of the South Pacific Division.

Next to him is Saw Samuel, secretary of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

Then we have Gordon Christo, Southern Asia Division secretary.

Then we have Audrey Andersson, secretary of the Trans-European Division.

Next to him is Onaolapo Ajibade, who is the secretary of the West-Central Africa Division.

Then we have Tibor Szilvasi, who is the secretary of the Middle East and North Africa Union.

So, ladies and gentlemen, you may be seated. It is time for the 2015 secretary's report to convene.

I will be delivering the first part of the report, and the second part will be delivered by David Trim, who is the director of the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research.

The story is told of a physician bringing his daughter to preschool. So one day when he was driving the 4-year-old daughter to preschool and the daughter was seated next to the driver's seat, and, lo and behold, the father noticed the daughter playing with his stethoscope. And he was delighted. He said to himself, *Look what my daughter is doing. She has been impressed by my profession. She is going to step into my footsteps.* But his thought was interrupted by the daughter speaking directly to the stethoscope. And she said, "Welcome to McDonald's. May I take your order, please?"

So much for stepping into the footsteps of someone. But there is one person whose footsteps we need to follow. In 1913 at the General Conference session the General Conference secretary was none other than William Spicer. He was instrumental in the establishment or the creation of the mission board. He was always mission-minded.

He spent decades working with the General Conference president to implement ideas of foreign missions at the General Conference. He was also a former missionary to India, where Spicer Memorial College, which is now Spicer University, was named after him. Elder Spicer saw a worldwide mission program as the defining responsibility of the General Conference.

Elder Spicer and his colleagues worked long and hard to put this mission infrastructure in place. And a giant step was taken to establish the mission board. By 1913, at the General Conference session, the focus on mission was already taking place. Among the delegates were some 100 delegates from countries outside of North America. This was unprecedented in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Outside of North America the membership was roughly 50,000. And in that report Elder Spicer said, “What John the prophet saw in vision on the island of Patmos we see with our own eyes today, the last message of the everlasting gospel flying to every land and nation, bringing forth the predicted harvest in a people keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”

And today we can certainly resonate with Elder Spicer that mission has indeed taken root outside of the North American Division. And we can certainly praise God for that.

I spent many years in a classroom, and having spent that long in a classroom, some habits die hard. So I’m going to give you a quiz this morning. Are you ready for the quiz?

Please don’t use your voting device.

[Laughter.]

Here is the quiz. What is the main purpose of the secretary’s report at a General Conference session? This is a multiple-choice question. OK?

Choice number 1: To allow delegates time to catch up on sleep. Number 2: A time filler before the Nominating Committee brings a report. Number 3: To check on the General Conference secretary to

see if he has done his job. Number 4: A chance to review world church growth statistics. Number 5: None of the above.

What would you say?

I cannot see you; neither can I hear you. If you voted for number 1 or 2, I will be praying for you.

[Laughter.]

If you voted for number 3, you will be praying for me.

[Laughter.]

If you voted for number 4, you are partially correct, because the secretary's report certainly has to do with some statistics. But statistics are not ends in themselves. Statistics must be placed in the context of mission. And so I will certainly be bringing you some figures.

And so number 5 is not correct. So what is the correct answer? The correct answer is number 6.

[Laughter.]

Of course, that's a trick question. How else to wake people up but to give you a trick question once in a while? So number 6 is "To remind ourselves that mission is not something we talk about. It is the reason for the existence of the church." Can we say amen to that?

[Applause.]

Thank you very much.

That reminds me of a story of a man flying in a hot-air balloon. And he was hopelessly lost, and so he lowered himself to the field. And he shouted to someone walking on the ground. He said, "Sir, can you tell me where I am?"

And the man on the ground said, "Sure, I can tell you where you are. You are at 43 degrees, 12 minutes, 21.2 seconds north, and 120 degrees, 8 minutes, 12.8 seconds west. You are at 212 meters above sea level. Right now, you are just hovering here and there. But on your way here you were at a speed of 1.883 knots per second at 1.929 radius.

The man in the balloon said, “Thank you very much, sir. By the way, are you a statistician?”

And the man on the ground said, “Yes, of course I’m a statistician. How did you know?”

The man in the balloon said, “Three things tell me you are statistician. Number one, everything that you told me is absolutely accurate. Number two, you gave me more details than I wanted. Number three, you give me the information in such a way that it’s totally useless to me.”

[Laughter.]

Hopefully this morning the figures I’ll be giving you will be understandable, by the grace of God. So here are some numbers. But remember, this report is not all about numbers. It’s about numbers couched in the context of mission. The statistics we’ll look at today are meant to help us to ascertain the strengths and the weaknesses of the church. Where we have done well, we just praise the living God. Where we have not done well, we will buckle up and press on by the grace of God.

And so from the beginning of the report, I’m going to tell you in summary the milestones that a church has achieved so far.

The first milestone is in the area of membership. In 2013 the size of the Seventh-day Adventist family around the world reached a new height. That’s the year the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church reached the 18 million mark. And according to some statistics, the Adventist Church is now the fifth-largest Christian community worldwide, after Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Anglicism, and the Assemblies of God. We just praise God for that. So we are the number five, according to *Christianity Today*.

By the way, this report is an interactive report. I will be doing my part in giving you the report, but you also can respond to the report by following the cue on the projection. OK. So when you see the words that the church says something, we just follow. What you say? Let the church say, “Hallelujah!”

In 2010 we had close to 17 million members. As of December 31, 2014, we have about 18.5 million Seventh-day Adventists around the world. That is an increase of 1.55 million church members over a five-year period. In 1955 we achieved the first million Seventh-day Adventist around the world.

The second milestone we reached during the past quinquennium was the new high in the number of people who have joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church in a single year.

In 2014 the Adventist Church added 1.16 million believers into the Adventist Church through baptism or by profession of faith. This is the highest annual baptisms on record. And we just praise God for that.

And that is translated to about 3,200 baptisms every day, or 133 baptisms every hour, or 2.2 baptisms every minute. Let the church say “Hallelujah!”

From 2004 to 2014 we had 6.6 million people join the Seventh-day Adventist faith community through baptism and profession of faith. From 2004 to 2014 there were more than 1 million baptisms per year.

And as far as world baptisms are concerned, you can see on the screen. Four divisions have outstanding baptismal records: the East-Central Africa Division, the Inter-American Division, the South American Division, and the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division. These are the four growth engines of the church, and we just praise God for that.

[Applause.]

The third milestone is in terms of church planting. Last year goes down in our history as the best church-planting year on record. In 2014 we had 78,810 churches, as well as 69,000 companies. In 2014 alone we planted 2,444 new churches, and that is 6.7 new churches per day. And we just praise God for that. That is about 3.58 hours for a new church to be planted. And let the church say amen to that.

The year 2014 was a record-breaking year. It had the highest number of baptisms, it had the highest number of churches planted, it was the tenth consecutive year of more than 1 million baptisms, it

was the twelfth consecutive year of more than 2,000 new churches being planted. And we just praise God for that.

So today, 18.5 million strong and still counting.

And I'm going to tell you a little bit about the distribution of our church around the world. How many countries were there in the United Nations? 237. How many countries have we entered as a Christian denomination? 215.

Presently we have 13 divisions, one attached union, 132 unions, and 633 missions or conferences. In 2013 we reached 18 million members.

The world demographics have changed tremendously in the past 50 years or so. Social scientists are now telling us that the world can be roughly divided into two broad categories: global north and global south. Global north is comprised of countries of North America, European countries, as well as Australia. Global south encompasses Africa, Inter-America, South America, and the Asia-Pacific region.

What about in terms of statistics? in terms of membership? Well, you can see on the chart that in 1960 global south represented about 54 percent of all world membership and global north represented about 46 percent of world membership.

And look at the statistics for 2014. Global south has grown from 54 percent to a whopping 92 percent of world membership, and global north has declined from 46 percent to 8 percent in 2014.

What about in terms of baptism? Global south represented about 69 percent of world baptisms in 1960. In 2014 global south represented 97 percent of world baptisms. What does that tell you? That demographics are changing very quickly.

In terms of [ascension], the same thing. [Ascension] is baptism, class, profession of faith.

What about number of churches? Basically, it's the same trend.

We just want to do a little experiment. Those of you who are delegates and who are from global south, meaning to say if you come from Inter-America, South America, the African continent, Asia-Pacific area, would you like to stand? Delegates from the global south, please stand.

[Applause.]

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

Ninety-eight percent of world membership is now in global south. In terms of congregations, it's the same thing.

What about world membership in terms of percentage? OK. This is a very interesting chart. I will put two side by side. OK. Let's start from Africa on the top. Fifty-two years ago Africa represented about 19 percent of world membership. Today Africa represents 38 percent of world membership.

[Applause.]

Fifty years ago Latin America represented 10 percent of world membership, and today they represent 32 percent of world membership. [Applause.]

Asia represented 14 percent of world membership; today, 19 percent.

North America used to represent 37 percent of world membership; today, roughly 7 percent.

Europe used to represent 16 percent of world membership; today, about 2 percent.

And so 52 years ago an Adventist village of 100 would look like this: 27 from North America, 20 from Latin America, 19 from Africa, 16 from Europe, 14 from Asia, and 4 from Ocean-India.

Today this is how it looks: 38 from Africa, 32 from Latin America, 19 from Asia, 7 from North America, 2 from Europe, and 2 from Ocean-India.

And so this church is multicolored, multicultural, multilingual, multiethnic, multifaceted, but one mission, one people, waiting for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

[Applause.]

So if you look across the landscape of the church today, it looks very different. We have people of one color; we have people of another color. Some have small eyes; some have bigger eyes. Brown and yellow, black and white, all are precious in his sight. And we can all say “amen” to that.

This is the great Advent family we have loved and cherished. So if you want to describe the church today, you may describe it as an international family, because it comprises every conceivable color.

There’s good news and bad news. The story is told of a doctor telling his patient about good news and bad news. He told his patient, “John, I have good news and bad news for you. The good news is you have only two days to live.”

And John said, “If that’s good news, what can be bad news?”

And the doctor said, “The bad news is I forgot to tell you yesterday.”

[Laughter.]

While we have gains in the church, unfortunately we also have losses. This is the reality of the situation we face. During the past quinquennium, from 2010 to 2014, 6.2 million people were added to the church. At the same time, during the same period, we had 3.7 people, church members, left the church. And that is a tragic loss that the church has been experiencing.

So during the past 10-year period the loss was about 60 percent. During the five-year period the loss was about 48 percent. And this is a critical need of the church that needs to be addressed. And this secretary’s report is not the platform for us to address that issue, but we need to address the issue of the leaky-bucket syndrome. We need to find ways and means to rectify the losses, the tremendous hemorrhage, from the church.

Last year I had the privilege of visiting the city of Nagasaki. And I visited the museum that commemorates World War II.

And in that museum I came across this picture that has been haunting me for months now. This is a picture taken by an American photographer who visited Nagasaki after the atomic bombs had been dropped. And one day he saw this boy, about 10 years old, carrying a baby on his back. And he said that in those days in Japan, children often carried the little brothers and sisters on their backs. But the boy clearly looked different, and the photographer said, "I could see that he had come to the place with a serious reason." What kind of place had he come to?

It was a place of cremation. Because of the disaster, many people lost their lives. And according to the Japanese custom, people who had died were cremated. So he was walking to the place of cremation, where there was a funeral pyre. So carrying that little brother, the boy was wearing no shoes; his face was hard. And the little brother's head was tipped back.

And the boy stood there for about five or 10 minutes. And the man in white clothes came over to receive the baby from the boy. So the people untied the ropes and brought the boy to the fire. And it was then that the photographer noticed that the little brother was already dead..

Imagine the magnificent love demonstrated by the 10-year-old brother carrying that little dead brother to give him a decent cremation. Oh, the lesson for us.

There are many new babes in church today. How do we regard them? Do we regard them as mere statistics? Do we regard them as pawns in our hands to advance our political career? What will it be? They are human beings. They are Seventh-day Adventists. They are our brothers and sisters, and we need to take better care of them.

There are many mission challenges facing us today even though we have entered most of the countries in the United Nations. But the work remains a challenging job. Because if we read Matthew 28:19, 20 correctly, we will interpret that making disciples of all nations is the marching order of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

And the word “nations” is very interesting. If you go back to the original language of the New Testament, the word is *ethni*. What does *ethni* mean? This is where we get the English word “ethnicity.” In other words, when we enter a country, it is not just entering the country in general. The commission is to enter the country and work on every conceivable ethnic group in that particular country. Then we can say we have fully evangelized their country.

So Jesus was saying the gospel must be proclaimed, not in every geopolitical location, but within every individual ethnic group that are within every nation.

So the fulfillment of the Great Commission is measured, not by the number of countries we enter, important though that may be, but by the extent we disciple all people groups and establish congregations in all of these countries.

Consider Kenya, for example. About 70 percent of Seventh-day Adventists in Kenya belong to two tribes: the Kisii tribe and the Luo tribe. About 25 percent of our membership comes from the four largest tribes. And so the majority of the tribes in Kenya have not yet been evangelized.

Then we have the challenge of urban mission, which is the [crying need] of missions at this time. We have been baptizing many people from the islands and from rural areas. Not that these people are not worthy to be saved. Certainly Christ died on their behalf as well. But there are many people living in cities who have been neglected. And so as a church we have to buckle up and press on, working in cities to rescue honest-hearted people for the kingdom of God.

Then there is the challenge of foreign mission versus home mission.

On a map you can see a distribution of all long-term missionaries. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we call long-term missionaries interdivision employees, or IDEs. So we have about 700 of them, more around the world, and they are in various countries and distributions on the map.

We also have another kind of missionary. We call it Adventist Volunteer Service.

And this is really heartening. And would you like to see the faces of a real IDE missionary and a real AVS missionary? Would you like to see them? Would you like to meet them? Yes. I'm glad you asked.

We would like to invite all the IDE missionaries, whether you are in the bleachers, whether you are in the audience, IDE missionaries as well as AVS missionaries, to please stand at this time.

[Applause.]

These are the heroes of mission. They have been following in the footsteps of J. N. Andrews, our first missionary, so they have chosen the path of sacrifice for the gospel. They are Seventh-day Adventist missionaries.

Those of you who are sitting around them, please extend to them the right hand of fellowship. Give them a hug, give them a word of the courage right now.

Then we have the challenge of Global Mission pioneers. Global Mission pioneers are nationals working in different countries around the world. So far we have more than 2,000 Global Mission pioneers in 104 countries. If there is a challenge that is facing the church today, that will be the challenge of Global Mission. Global Mission means "mission" to the non-Christian world: the Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, secular, and urban world.

We have directors in Global Mission centers spread around the world dedicated to evangelize people in these particular religious blocs around the world, especially in the 10/40 window. This is certainly an item for our continual prayer.

Then there are many unsung heroes in our church today: laypeople giving a loaf of bread, a glass of water, a Bible study; church elders and deacons. They are missionaries too. They are home missionaries, yet they are the unsung heroes of the church.

Last night we saw young people before us. Our president was telling us how these young people have been shouldering a heavy share of their responsibility as missionaries for our Lord Jesus Christ and what a pleasure it is to meet young people around the world preaching the gospel.

Ellen White wrote: “God expects personal service from everyone to whom He has entrusted a knowledge of the truth for this time. Not all can go as missionaries to foreign lands, but all can be home missionaries in their families and neighborhoods.” We thank God for that encouragement.

When we think of the conflict before us and the great work that He must do, we tremble, but we must remember that our Helper is almighty. We may feel strong in His strength. We may unite our ignorance to His wisdom, our feebleness to His might, our witness to His unfailing strength. Through Him we may be more than conquerors.

Pretty soon, by the grace of God with a dawning of the Holy Spirit, the latter rain, the earth will indeed be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as waters cover the sea. And indeed, Jesus’ words will have come true: “They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.”

Arise! Shine! Jesus is coming!

[Applause.]

DAVID TRIM: Brother Chairman, Dr. Ng has told you there is good news and bad news. He told you the good news. I will share with you the bad news. But I will suggest to you that although it seems only like bad news, it actually has some good news, because, as I will show you later, it points us to the centrality of Jesus’ final command to us, which is to make disciples.

Brother Chairman, during the past quinquennium the world church carried out a series of far-reaching membership audits that were prompted by research of the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research [ASTR], which indicated that Adventists’ membership was overstated—in some cases, very considerably overstated.

Further research showed that membership statistics are inflated because of systemic failure to report accurately losses that include both deaths and the loss of living members, which we describe differently. In some parts of world they're called apostasies, other parts, backsliders, and so on.

Now, subsequent to that, Brother Chairman, ASTR supervised survey-based research into why members stopped attending church and left or lapsed membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

And I shared data from those studies at last year's Annual Council and in several divisions. But my report today is strictly statistical. It is the "what," rather than the "why," of membership. My report summarizes the results of the membership audits and suggests some implications for the mission and ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Now, the church collects a wide range of data. But, you know, in organizational statistics it's well recognized that often just one key statistic affords vital insights into the accuracy of all the other data. For Adventist membership metrics, that key statistic is the mortality rate. The mortality rate is the number of deaths per thousand people in a population.

Now, it's possible to calculate mortality rates for a national population or, indeed, for the world population, but also for groups within the wider population.

For example, as those of you who work in health will know, infant- and child-mortality rates are regarded as crucial indicators of public health in a country or region. And so it's also possible to calculate the Adventist mortality rate.

Now, in the analysis ASTR carried out, we calculated Adventist mortality rates for each division separately so that we could compare like with like. We also then calculated it globally. And then Adventist mortality rates were compared with the mortality rate of the general population in the respective divisions and worldwide.

And, Brother Chairman, because one year does not reveal a trend, we carried out this analysis for the period from 1995 through the end of 2010. And this revealed that the global Adventist mortality rate

was always well below the general global mortality rate. And if you look on the screen at the graph, you can see that it especially dipped as the 2000s progressed.

Furthermore, in many divisions Adventists' mortality rates in this period regularly were significantly lower than the general mortality rates in their respective territories.

Now, Seventh-day Adventists follow divine principles for healthful living given to us through the Spirit of Prophecy, and we tend to live longer than average. However, the difference between Adventists and whole-population mortality rates is so great that healthful living alone cannot explain it.

In the twenty-first century there have been 3.39 Adventist deaths per thousand church members. So our mortality rate was 3.39, whereas general mortality was 8.55. So our average mortality was under 40 percent of the general mortality. And yet, Brother Chairman, Loma Linda University's major study of Adventist mortality shows that death rates of American Adventists, males and females, are 66 percent and 88 percent, respectively, of the rates for non-Adventists.

A study of Norwegian Adventist mortality found that Adventist men were at 82 percent of the expected death rates and Adventist women at 95 percent.

Now, similar studies have yet to be done for the global south, but Adventist mortality rates in Africa and Asia are unlikely to differ from general rates as much as in North America and Europe.

So, in sum, what scientific studies tell us, including studies by scientists who are church members, is that the effect, on our mortality rates, of following an Adventist diet and lifestyle would be at best to make them two-thirds of the general population's.

And so, in other words, our global mortality rate, which was 39.65 percent, was not believable, even after taking the Adventist health advantage into account.

In eight divisions, including four of the six with more than 1 million members, Adventist mortality was less than 40 percent of the general mortality, and in five divisions it was less than 20 percent.

The logical conclusion is that our reported membership was and is overstated, truly larger than life.

Now, I presented this analysis to the 2011 Annual Council, and the world church has instituted a series of remedial measures to be able to achieve an accurate membership statistics.

Regular attendance counts have been added to the statistics that all local churches and administrative units are asked to report annually. And I thank those of you in the audience who are secretaries or church clerks for helping with that.

In 2012 the office of Seventh-day Adventist membership software was created at the General Conference. And currently two entire divisions and unions in five others have adopted or are beginning to adopt approved Adventist membership software. But the measure with the most impact has been extensive implementation of membership audits.

Now, brothers and sisters, I know that membership audits in recent years—or at least up until very recently—have been uncommon, at least in some parts of the world. I realize membership audits can seem strange and alien, perhaps even threatening.

Yet they are actually very Adventist, and I'll give you just one example of that.

In 1863 the Michigan Conference, the first state conference, held its session in conjunction with the first founding General Conference session. And they received the following report from the Battle Creek Adventist Church of Battle Creek, Michigan.

The report goes as follows: This church was organized October 24, 1861, with 72 members; admitted since, 36; removed, nine; deceased, two; membership at present, 97.

So they were keeping meticulous records of their membership, including deducting those who had stopped attending or been disfellowshipped. So membership order is as old as our church, and it is actually older than the General Conference.

And it is the process of membership audit that the world church has strongly promoted during the past quinquennium.

Every division has carried out audits in at least part of its territory, and the majority of opinions have likewise undertaken at least partial audits. Worldwide, however, the audit process is not yet complete. There is still much to do, and so this report is, in a sense, preliminary.

In 2014 a total of 55,320 deaths was reported, the equivalent of three deaths per thousand Adventists worldwide, which is up from 2.67 early in the past quinquennium. That figure, 2.67, was exactly one-third, 33 percent, of the general global mortality rate, which is the lowest this statistic has been in our history.

The three deaths per thousand in 2014 equate to 39 percent of net global mortality, so that's up from 33 percent.

We still have some way to go, but the accuracy of our records is improving.

What is striking, however, is that the audits of the past four years reveal major losses among the living. It is not just that deaths have been underreported. So, too, have the numbers of those who have left the church.

We currently describe them in our statistical reports in two ways. First, there are the dropped, a term that has replaced "apostasies."

Second, though, is the category of "missing." Those are people who, when an audit was carried out, simply couldn't be found.

The result of the widespread audits over the past five years is indicated in the graph that's on the screen in front of you. As Dr. Ng reported, around 3.6 million members were dropped or registered as missing, a little more than a quarter of a million deaths were recorded, and about 6 million people were added by baptism or by profession of faith. And what we see in the charts is that the number of reported

deaths increased slightly but remained relatively stable, whereas the totals of the missing and those dropped from membership increased sharply.

This is the effect of the membership audits.

What are the implications?

The first implication is the sheer magnitude of the losses—the dropped and missing, not including the dead. The dropped and missing are so many that they undercut the considerable numbers of accessions.

The huge number of members slipping out the metaphorical back door undercuts the growth that comes in the front door. And this is particularly revealed in this next chart, where you can see the two graphically compared.

Improved retention is vital. At times we talk about nurture, retention, and discipling as though it's not part of church growth. It is, because our mission is as it always has been to reach the world with the gospel and the third angel's message. And if we are losing so many, it harms our efforts to reach the world.

There is another important implication. The impact of losses on church growth is revealed here. You can see that our growth rates in the late 1990s and early 2000s seem to be spectacular, and then there is what seems to be a collapse.

But I want to emphasize: Even though this seems to be a phenomenon of this quinquennium, it is not. On the face of it, yes, growth has been slower in the past five years. But this is a statistical illusion, because many of those whose departure was registered by the membership audits did not leave our ranks in the past five years. Our long-term failure to implement membership audits in much of the world means that we cannot know when many stopped attending church or lost their faith in the Adventist message. They could have separated from us at any point over the past 25 years, and, in some cases, probably before.

Now, this is a vital point that I want delegates to take note of, because, put simply, we are not suffering a church growth crisis. If we go back, you may think we're suffering a church growth crisis. We're not. We're simply feeling the effects of a statistical correction.

The truth is that the seemingly stellar growth rates of the 1990s and early 2000s were actually lower than we thought, while our real growth rate in this quinquennium is probably higher than it appears.

It's important, moreover, to recognize that losses were not caused by the audits. Membership audits merely register the departure of those who have already separated from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They reveal the actual magnitude of a problem that already exists and, I'm afraid to say, has existed for many years.

And this brings me to the final implication of the membership audits. They have revealed the actual scale of losses not just in the past quinquennium or the past decade, but during the past 50 years.

This chart shows you the total number of people who have been members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the past half century and the proportion that left.

In those five decades a grand total of 33,202,016 people have been members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Praise God.

But 13,026,925 of them left the church. Our net loss rate is 39.25 percent. In effect, four out of every 10 church members have slipped away over the past half century.

To conclude, our analysis of mortality rates indicates that for several reasons membership systematics are still somewhat overstated, and it is vital, therefore, that membership audits continue.

But I would like you to think of this, not as a threat or a burden, but as an opportunity. Why do we carry out membership audits? First, as church leaders, we aim for transparency and integrity. Can you say amen?

When we publish membership figures to the world even though we know deep down that they are wrong, we are bearing false witness. That we are partly deceiving ourselves does not make it less of a lie.

Second, we carry out membership audits to improve strategic planning and enable good stewardship of resources, for if church leaders do have an accurate understandings of how membership is distributed and where it is strong and weak, it is impossible to plan effectively for expanding God's kingdom, and resources may be misallocated. But ultimately we do not conduct audits simply to tidy up the membership books and to get more precise figures, wonderful though those may be.

The parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15 indicates knowing how many sheep are in the fold is foundational for the Divine Shepherd, who is our example.

My brothers and sisters, every one of those more than 3 million members who were logged as missing or dropped from membership in the past five years and every one of the 13.026 million members who left our ranks over the past 50 years is a soul precious to Jesus Christ. Regularly monitoring membership is a first step to improving pastoral care and, thus, church growth. Membership audits should become a permanent part of the way God's remnant church does mission and ministry as part of a wider strategy for improving retention and discipling.

And I make this appeal not only to the church leaders who are gathered here, but also to church members, for are we not our brothers' and sisters' keepers? Membership care is the business of every believer in Jesus Christ, and that means that local churches need to rally together to nurture, disciple, and retain each other. This can't just be left to the pastor.

In conclusion, Brother Chairman, brothers and sisters, I believe Seventh-day Adventists must emulate that good shepherd who laid aside everything to search for just 1 percent of the flock when it went missing.

Accurate statistical records are not an end in themselves. They are a foundation for more powerful ministry to the flock entrusted to us by the Savior.

[Applause.]

G. T. NG: Thank you, Dr. Trim, for that report.

Mr. Chairman, if it pleases you, I would like to move that we record the secretary's report.

PARDON MWANSA: We have a motion to record the secretary's report. Do we have a second?

Seconded.

OK. At this time, we will see if we have any that are burning with questions to Elder G. T.

OK. I don't see any name recorded. Those of you intending to speak, follow the procedure, get your badges scanned first. Badges scanned first.

OK. We do have someone at microphone 2, please. Microphone 2, Robertsen.

ROGER ROBERTSEN: I'm not a statistician, but it seems obvious from the comments on growth rate that we have a problem. It's come down from 5 percent in 2006 to 1.85 percent in 2014. And we've heard many reasons for this, but if this continues until the next GC session, we will see that there will be no growth at all.

My question is really the accession rates. How are they developed? Because this is the net growth, but I'm talking about the accession rates. Are they also coming down?

PARDON MWANSA: G. T., would you like to respond to that?

G. T. NG: Mr. Chairman, the bigger the organization gets, the more difficult it is to grow at the same rate that it has been growing in the past. The church is still growing, but it is not growing as fast as it once was. This is a prevailing situation in many, many organizations. So we are still having positive growth, but our growth is not as much as we would like.

Part of it is because of membership audits that affect the number of members that we have in the church. The second reason is the negative growth that we observe in some unions, especially the European unions. And so this is a multifaceted question that has been responsible for the lower growth rate through the years.

ROGER ROBERTSEN: So if this trend continues, when will it flatten out completely?

G. T. NG: If the trend continues, you will have an upward swing when the latter rain comes.

[Laughter and applause.]

And this is a fact, because the church is impotent to do mission. Humanly speaking, how can we take on this task of doing mission for God? We are puny human beings. We do what we can. And that's the reason we need every bit of help from the latter rain that will empower the church to do what is impossible.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you, Brother G. T.

We will take another speaker from microphone 2. Kwasi, microphone 2.

KWASI ANIAGYEI: The world population is 7.2 billion, if I'm not mistaken. And if we are at 18 million, that means every Adventist has to reach 4,000 people. That's one to 4,000. We've lost 3.7 million. If we added to the existing number, then every Adventist has reach 1.260 people globally. This is a very good exercise. It tells us the magnitude of the mission before us.

And don't let us forget: almost all the members who have left our churches are either at home or have joined other churches. We need to work hard and bring these people back.

Thank you.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. We'll take that as a comment and go to microphone 6.

Delmer, please, microphone 6.

DELMER NAVALLO CARO: Mr. Chairman, I would like to request for the records department a few things that haven't been said. And I don't know if they have been kept, but I think it would be proper to propose that there is a need for more information for the future. Or if you have it now, it probably would be a good time to hear it.

I have a few comments. First thing, the south world is going to feed in the next 10 years the north world. All the food is gradually increasing in the south world—I mean the production of the food. And this is a very important issue, because that means that the north world is dedicating themselves to

different things than growing and planting and having production as a way of living, instead of commercial production or economic production.

And I think this is important to consider, because it defines many group ages, racial issues, income issues. And this is going to give us information that we can analyze and, obviously, after analyzing it, have a strategy corrected so we can face our evangelism correctly to the proper group or a statistic group that can give us and lead us into our different leadership or evangelist projects.

Why are people leaving the church? Probably the answer is simple: because we are not giving them what they need. And that takes us to think that probably we have to go even to the smallest church to give them what they need. And if we don't know the group age, if you don't know their racial standards and everything, we won't be able to give them, humanly speaking, the right and precise things they need.

And please comment if you have those percentages so we can go back to our countries and to our regions and unions and focus on helping those that really are the most needed ones for evangelism and really, you know, the spiritual insight they need.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you, Brother Delmer.

Brother G. T. will comment on that.

G. T. NG: Mr. Chairman, thank you for that excellent question. I wish I had two hours to answer that question, because it is an important question and it has to be properly addressed.

But, in a nutshell, 30 seconds, I will tell you that it is a question of nurturing. After a person has been baptized, he or she has to be nurtured by the church, and not necessarily by the pastor. It has to be the responsibility of the community of faith, the church itself, laypeople, elders, deacons. Everybody should have a part in the nurturing program of the church.

Another reason members leave the church is that they have been baptized in a hurry, you know. We pick fruits when they are ripe. Sometimes, unfortunately, we pick fruits when they are half ripe, and they have a way of disappearing as a result.

So it's a multifaceted issue that the church needs to address. It is also an issue related to the way we train pastors. It is also an issue that relates to administrators, the expectation of leadership on baptism. So it's a good question, but now is not the time to address those issues.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you, Brother G. T.

I do have seven people on the microphones. I would encourage the speakers to be brief, to the point, and to ask the question or the comment they need to make.

We will acknowledge at this time microphone 1, Floyd Morris. Please.

FLOYD MORRIS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I'm very impressed by the statistics that have been put forward to us as delegates. But I want to make a suggestion, because as an advocate for persons with disabilities, one question was asked about where the future growth of the church lies. I want to suggest that persons with disabilities constitute a harvest that we have not been putting a lot of focus on. And based on the World Health Organization report 2010, 17 percent of the world population constitutes persons with disabilities. You're talking about a billion people. If we should target for the next five years 1 percent, we're talking about 10 million individuals coming into the church. And this is where I want to commend the Inter-America Division under the leadership of Elder [Israel] Leito, because this is where the division is going in terms of winning souls, persons with disabilities. And the church has to prepare itself to ensure that this group that meant so much to Jesus when He was on earth is brought into the church and a part of the kingdom.

God bless you.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you, Brother Floyd. We will note and have taken that comment.

We go to microphone 1. And we will take Luis Tavares, please, microphone 1.

LUIS TAVARES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Impressive too are those figures. And I'm here to make a few comments that I think all the leaders here should be thinking about. I think those figures, mortality rates in Seventh-day Adventist Church, represent a very good weapon or tools we can make use to evangelize. And it's important to have that information separate the losses of the membership. We need to know which ones are the dead ones or just apostasies. And we need to be very accurate in having that information. More rigidity, more rigor, as we do with baptism—we need to do it with the losses in the church. So we need to improve the losses report as we do it for members winning.

I can suggest that we need in the statistics specific ages of those apostatizing, so that leaders can know what to do to avoid apostasy in the church. It's very important for us to equip our Sabbath school leader, youth leader, and all other departments in the church better.

Thank you.

G. T. NG: Thank you.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. We'll take that as a comment and go to microphone 2, where we have Melanie from East-Central Africa.

MELANIE OSURI: Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to comment on the youth, especially, who are leaving the church. I commend the Secretariat for the report. But if you could break down especially the age groups and look at the youth who are leaving the church and why they are leaving the church.

Another thing I would like to comment on is the importance of why youth are leaving the church. This is probably not the right time, but I am moved to think that this is very important information. And if the Secretariat could supply that information on why we have people leaving the church and all the detailed info, we need it. It might take two hours, as you said. But even if it's in written form so that we can have it with us, we would really appreciate it.

The third comment is I would request the Secretariat, when they're doing the report on the research, to include the campuses and the universities. We have so many Christians, young Christians, on campuses and universities, and I think that we need to also include them, to show them in the report and the breakdown on how they are converted, and the losses and all—you know, every other thing that is done elsewhere.

And just to conclude, I think that it's really important that we have the ASTR report with the other material that we've been provided. And as my brother said just a minute ago, the health advantage that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has, especially in relation to the mortality rate and all of that—I think that is very crucial info. And if you can get a hold on it, it would go very far in evangelism, especially in this time when there's so many diseases that are ailing people out there.

Thank you so much.

PARDON MWANSA: Thanks, Melanie. Any comment, either G. T. or David?

DAVID TRIM: Brother Chairman, Dr. Ng has asked me to reply. First, I appreciate very much the last question—the last two questions, especially coming from what looks to me like younger delegates. I appreciate their passion and concern.

I'm happy to say, Brother Chair, that a report of the surveys that I referred to at the beginning, is available on the Adventist archives Web site. And if you go to—I hate to be self-promoting, but it's adventistarchives.org. You can go there and you can find resources. If you look on the resources for nurture and retention and research, you will find the archives there. I wish everyone would read them.

There is more data as well. And Dr. Ng reminded me that some divisions have held their own nurture and retention summits. In 2013 the world church had a world summit on nurture and retention. Divisions are now doing that. The Northern Asia-Pacific Division has held two. Other divisions are looking at holding them. So this is an issue I believe the world church is beginning really to grapple with.

But the data is there. And as for the last request for this report, a version of it is going to appear. And I see that the people down at the booth have already put the Web site page up, so thank you for that efficiency.

My report will appear in the *Adventist Review Bulletin*, and a fuller version will be made available on the Web site as well.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you so much, Brother David.

I have again about seven people on the microphones. We encourage you to be brief so that we would come to some point of voting the receipt of this report.

Let's go to microphone 2 and take Tara VinCross, please.

TARA VIN CROSS: Good morning. I want to thank you for the encouraging and challenging report that you just presented and, first of all, to commend you. It would be far easier for you just to give simply the positive for us to cheer and say amen and hallelujah to. But in recent years, seeing us grapple with the challenges that we are facing as a denomination, for me, as a young adult, this is incredibly encouraging. It also challenges me as a pastor and in our churches to focus on not only literature evangelism, public evangelism, and Bible studies, but also discipleship and nurture, as you have said.

So my hope, other than commending you for this report, is that we would all go back and grapple with how we teach people how to have an abiding relationship with Jesus Christ, because we don't know how to do this automatically. So thank you for being willing to share what is often easily dismissed or overlooked.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you, Tara. We take that as a comment and greatly appreciate it.

We'll go to microphone 4 and take Paolo Benini. Microphone 4, please.

PAOLO BENINI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I strongly appreciate the report we received from the Secretariat and from the Office of Statistics. I appreciate the positive, and even the stress you put on

the negative. We must be honest with ourselves. We must be able to read the reality without enlarging. I think that this is a good sign for the future of our church.

I commend that the General Conference has made a clear recommendation to the field, to the division, not only to retain people, but even to regain people, giving them identity, giving them a vision of the call that each member has for their own. Thank you very much.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. And we take that again as a comment and go to microphone 2, John Brunt.

JOHN BRUNT: I want to thank Dr. Trim for his report and commend the effort to be accurate in our statistics.

I think there is an area you didn't mention. In order to be accurate, one of the problems we need to solve is the difficulty of duplicate membership because of the difficulty of interdivisional membership transfers. I pastor in an area in which we have lots of immigration. We have foreign language Sabbath school classes in Portuguese and Spanish and Indonesian in our church. We have a lot of people transferring in from other divisions, and we find it almost impossible to get those membership transfers.

We get our clerk working on it, we work for several months, finally give up, and bring the people in on profession of faith. So they're members in our church, and somewhere they're missing members at another church in another part of the world. And it seems to me that's a problem that we have to solve if our statistics are really going to be accurate.

DAVID TRIM: Dr. Ng has asked me to briefly note: There's no question that this is a major problem and that many professions of faith are actually not new converts, but Adventists from other parts of the world. This is one reason the General Conference established the office of membership software. Sherri Ingram-Hudgins, the director of that, is doing important work down on the floor with the audiovisual and can't be on the platform. But as membership software, both e-Adventist in North

America and what's called ACMS in other parts of the world, is rolled out, we believe that this will resolve the very serious problem that Dr. Brunt has referred to.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you.

Luisa Mendoza, microphone 1.

LUISA CHANDUVI MENDOZA [speaking Spanish, through translator]: I would like to thank you for the opportunity that I have here today, and I want to thank the Lord, because I can be part of this church. And I would like to tell you that I was a member of a different church for 41 years.

The Lord led me the right way. Thank you to the testimony of love and companionship that our pastors showed to me. I am a doctor, and I used what I was using before coming to the church in the statistics part.

It is love that unites us in Christ, because we don't have any race or color or difference between our members. Love is what unites all of us. And if we use the love in the right way, we're going to see the statistics going up and no leaving of our members. We need to be like angels for our brothers and sisters who have left the church. May the Lord allow this to happen and may He bless us also. Amen.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you, Sister Luisa.

I remind the house that the list of people needing to speak is increasing. And that is OK, but I would like to encourage you maybe to just get to the point and ask Elder G. T. questions that will reflect the report that he gave.

We will go to microphone 6 and take Abraham Romero. Abraham Romero, microphone 6.

ABRAHAM GUERRERO ROMERO: Thank you, Brother Chairman.

I am delighted to see the trend in the reporting of the Secretariat in being way more transparent, way more open, to some of the issues that have not been addressed before. I am very happy about it because, rather than hiding some of our issues, it encourages us to see that the church does grapple with the issues of neglect, of false reporting, or underreporting.

In 1986 Elder Neal Wilson made a call to the Annual Council asking them to adopt a plan to reach all the world's people groups. And then a couple years later the church adopted what they called a major mission program in the worldwide church. The vision was, however, redirected from people groups to population segments. For instance, we have been able to report that we have Adventist presence in more than 200 countries of the world. The number of countries that have not been reached is very small.

So to the simple eye, it does look like the work is almost finished. But when Jesus told His disciples that we should reach all the world's people groups, he didn't mean Colombia, my country, Mexico, United States, India, or Afghanistan. He meant people groups, types of people within different limits of geography.

And I want to suggest whichever way it is appropriate that the GC would do something about coming back to that call by Elder Wilson to reach not only population segments or countries or the like, but actually target people groups within those geographical limits. Thank you.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. And G. T. wants to comment to this. We will take it as a comment and a suggestion.

Let me seek this body's advice. The list, as I look at it from where I am, of people needing to speak is increasing. I realize that we are working within a time limit. And also as chair, I have been reminded that the Nominating Committee is ready to bring its first report to the floor.

At this point I will encourage you to be brief and to the point. Let's take, if possible, the people that are on the screen and have no more coming; otherwise we might find ourselves managing just this item and failing to manage other items. So let's proceed in this way and see what we may do.

We'll go to microphone 4 and take Kathryn Proffitt, please.

KATHRYN PROFFITT: Thank you, Brother Chairman. The future growth of our church is, without question, in the hands of our young people. And I just want to bring to the entire church

membership an appeal to support Adventist education. This is not just about educating our young people; it's about evangelism in the most sustainable form.

We have, I believe, an inspired educational system. We're the second-largest parochial system in the world. But schools are closing. It's expensive for most—in fact, it's beyond the ability of most families to afford, on their own, a Seventh-day Adventist education. So we have to view this as a corporate responsibility. Just as public schools need everyone to contribute whether you have children or not, I just plead with this body to support Adventist education, because Adventist education and our young people are the future of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. Thank you. We will take that as a comment and proceed to microphone 2 and take Sydney, please, microphone 2.

SYDNEY GIBBONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to say that I've been very impressed by the tone of the report. Not only of the executive secretary and the audit for the membership, but also the general tone of this session, which is focused on mission, the second coming of Christ, and the engaging of the believers in the very purpose for which we exist.

And at the 2010 General Conference session we concluded with the resolution that led to establishing major committees across our division to address an issue that we considered to be of great significance, one that will come back to us at this session.

That heightened awareness suggested the significance attached to the matter.

My question is whether we might want to consider a type of initiative that would be different from what we generally do, and focus on mission to address the issue of the decline of membership and not only to come to a session with a report on the “what,” but address the issue of the “why” and also “how”—how to correct the problem of the rapid loss of membership and how to address it across all of our divisions significantly.

I also want to note that there was a comment made with regard to the trend and the tendency of organizations as we grow rapidly—that we reach a peak, after which the growth is not as rapid. And while this is true for organizations in general, when we think of a church with a global mission and the second coming of Christ, could we not think of a different paradigm for the church of God, where, as we continue to grow, we do not hit that plateau, but our growth is extensive, continuous, and sustainable?

And that type of reflection can be given across the divisions with different bodies at each level to address significantly not only the “what” but “why,” why are we losing our members, and second, “how,” how can we correct the problem so that we can go forward.

The second question I ask the secretary is Could we not in this session or shortly thereafter give consideration to a type of initiative that would engage our world church across all of our divisions to address this issue so that we return in five years’ time to the response beyond the “what” to the “why” and the “how”?

PARDON MWANSA: G. T., a brief comment to that?

G. T. NG: The General Conference is very concerned about the trend of heavy losses and this quinquennium. We’ve already set up a Nurture and Retention Committee. And the summit is ready to convene, and that initiative has spread to some divisions. So divisions are catching on. But not nearly enough has been done. So more should be done in the next quinquennium, depending who the administrators are the next quinquennium. So don’t look to us; look to the next team.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. Now I’m going to try something. I see that we might again continue to increase the number of people who want to speak, so may I get the sense of the body as to where you are? Would you like, after these nine people that are standing on the microphone to speak, that we take a vote, or would you like this to keep open? If you’d like us to close speeches after the nine people on the screen, just show me by raising this.

OK. Those who think we should still continue listening, show by the same sign.

OK. I think I get your guidance, that we close discussion after these nine people. And that's assuming the previous question is not called. If that is called, then we will close debate.

So at this time I'd like to take Jim on microphone 2, please.

JIM HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Yes. This is not the first time we've heard a lot about losses. And I've been in many places in which there's a lot of passionate appeals made and discussion about need to do it. But the big lack, I feel, that we've had is not giving people the "how"—not giving them tools and resources. So I hope the General Conference will work toward actually providing resources.

In our field we saw the need to help new members, and so we developed our own discipleship handbook so that every new member receives a six-month process in which a mentor is connected with them and they have a Bible and Spirit of Prophecy reading plan that they are started on. They learn about the devotional life, the Spirit of Prophecy. They learn about church life, church organization, church history, Adventist lifestyle. And then they're trained to be soul winners. We need practical tools like this so that the General Conference, just as it produces ministers' handbooks and elders' handbooks, can have handbooks for discipleship of new members, something highly practical. That's my recommendation. Thank you.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you, Jim.

We'll go to microphone 6 and take Passmore Mulambo after Brother David.

DAVID TRIM: Thank you, Brother Chairman. I appreciate your comment.

The Nurture and Retention Committee at the GC is actually working on a curriculum that has been requested. But there is already a discipleship program that the Nurture and Retention Committee at the General Conference recommends. It is call Growing Fruitful Disciples. It is developed by the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department. If you already have a discipleship program, we're not saying

you have to abandon it and change, but if you don't have one, the committee does recommend Growing Fruitful Disciples.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. We'll take microphone 6, Passmore Mulambo.

PASSMORE MULAMBO: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

In addressing the issues of why and how, there are many reasons, and some of the reasons for the membership loss have to do with doctrinal issues. But I would like to thank the executive secretary for the challenge for every member to be involved in the process of nurture and retention from the pastors and all of the members of the church. And I believe that's one of the major reasons of issues in which we shall be able to address the issue of membership losses, not only to the pastors, but every member of the church to be involved. Thank you.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. Microphone 2, Deza, please.

LEEZEL DEZA: We need godly, God-fearing children. In order to have godly, God-fearing children, we will need godly youth. In order to have godly youth, we need godly parents, godly teachers. And that curriculum comes from GC, I suppose, and that will be guided from God.

So as a teacher, I encourage you to continue bringing training for that curriculum that really teaches us about the character of God. And our children can handle it. Ellen White says that it will be an army of young people. Where are the young people?

Thank you for the opportunity to be here. And I encourage you to listen to the young people. The children have valuable things to say. "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them, for such is the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:11, NKJV).

And I also applaud those of you who are mentors, marriage mentors, women, men mentors. When you take us under your wing and when you build a personal relationship with us, you have the right to say, "You know what? What you're wearing is maybe not the best thing. But if you don't have a

relationship personally with me, you don't even know my name, you don't know anything about me. As a young person, I'm sorry, but you have no clout."

So as a godly, intelligent person, as I look at this room, I'm so encouraged. I implore you, take at least one person under your wing, encourage them, pray for them, know them, because you will know them forever in eternity and heaven. Thank you.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. Thank you. We will take microphone 4, Blasius. .

BLASIUS MANAGOS: Thank you, Chair. Thank you for what has been presented, very informative, very challenging, very encouraging.

Yet one of the challenges of the faith is the difficulty of reading the reports.

We have just statistics, numbers of people. I'm sure this has been asked, but do we have a software in place where we can have the details of people, information about people? One of the things that I've come to experience is that sometimes in the church we just have people by statistics. And a lot of people leave our church, not so much because of doctrinal reasons, but because of the relationships that we have in the church.. So my question is Do we have a software or some kind of instrument in place that we can use across the world, because we give the same report to the GC?

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. Let's see if G. T. can respond quickly to that.

G. T. NG: Dr. Trim already mentioned about the software being developed and or has been developed and being implemented throughout the world. So the software is capable of telling us the demographics of the church. So I think that will address the issues you're talking about.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you so much. Microphone 2. Ed, please.

ED HEYES: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the work of the Secretariat. I think they've done a great job. I'd like to call question on the motion.

PARDON MWANSA: OK. The question has been called. Are you ready to vote?

A second to that?

OK. It's been seconded.

All in favor that we take the vote at this time, show by raising high your voting cards, to receive the report.

Thank you.

Those opposed, by the same.

Thank you. [Voted.]

This concludes our agenda item. And thank you so much, Brother G. T.

OK. That was a vote to determine the previous question as to whether we should come to the vote on this. OK. It was not the call on the main motion.

OK. Are we ready to vote on the main motion, then? All those in favor show by raising your voting cards.

Opposed, by the same sign.

It is carried.

And thank you. Those of you that were on the microphones have obviously taken your seats, and thank you.

At this time we will take a report from the nominating Committee.

HOMER TRECARTIN: Mr. Chairman, we appreciate the Nominating Committee that this body has given us, and we are ready to make our first report. The secretary of the nominating Committee, Dr. Leslie Pollard, is going to make that report for us.

LESLIE POLLARD: Delegates to the sixtieth session of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, the Nominating Committee submits for the name of president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Dr. Ted N. C. Wilson. Brother Chairman, I move it.

PARDON MWANSA: OK. I was giving you the chance to come to this point. And thank you. I take that as a second to the motion made.

OK. At this time I will pause for a moment to see if there is any—OK. I will take microphone 3, Raymond Hartwell, microphone 3.

RAYMOND HARTWELL: Mr. Chairman, thank you. I have great respect for our church and for our leaders and for our process. I respectfully request that the report be referred back.

PARDON MWANSA: OK. That is a request, and it's not a motion. And at this time, let me address you briefly.

In most cases the Nominating Committee looks at and examines quite a lot before they bring their report here. We encourage referring the report back only if you have very substantive issues that you would want to raise with the Nominating Committee regarding the name.

So at this moment, unless you feel that that's the case, I would entertain a motion to be tested.

RAYMOND HARTWELL: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that very much, and I have a great respect for our process. And I do believe in due process in our church family around the world.

I'm willing to meet with the Nominating Committee if that should be their desire. According to our *General Conference Rules of Order*, page 5, under Elections, number 6, it states that "with a request that the report be referred back to the Nominating Committee for further consideration, it is the usual procedure for the chair to accept the referral."

PARDON MWANSA: Yes, it is the usual procedure, but I would then like to test it with the group, if you are willing to make it into a motion. I would rather get the sense of the body as to where they are.

RAYMOND HARTWELL: I'm respectfully requesting that we follow the written part that says, "It is the usual procedure to accept the referral."

Mr. Chairman, it's your session, and you can guide the body. I'm just presenting the request very respectfully.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. I'm going to follow, as you have said—

I see a point of order on microphone 6. I will take that. Let it be a point of order, microphone 6.

SADRAIL SAINT-ULYSSE: Brother Chairman, I just would like to point out that if there is a request for referral, it should be honored at all times.

PARDON MWANSA: With due respect to the observations you are making, I will go ahead and follow the rule of order by, first of all, doing something that is within our rules of order. I am quoting page C5, number 7: "When referrals are granted, all objections must then be made known to the Nominating Committee chair and secretary."

So with that, I would like to say the person who has raised this referral to come to the side of the room. The chairman of the Nominating Committee and the secretary will listen to you to see if the objection you have raised was not raised in the Nominating Committee. And they will give me a signal as to whether they would like this to be taken back or whether it is something that has already been looked at.

Can you please proceed to do that?

In the meantime, that leaves us suspended. And I would like to give opportunity to those who were in line wanting to speak to the Secretariat report. You can make your brief comment.

In other words, I could sit here and look at you as we wait, and the silence would be too long and too awkward. If we were musicians, that could fill the time. But in the absence of that, we can reflect and enjoy the report of the secretary.

OK. And we're not talking about the nominations or list item. That's not what we are talking on.

[Long pause for discussion.]

I would request those on the microphones probably just to take their seats as we wait.

I could have taken a point of order. I've seen microphone 2, microphone 4, on a point of order. At this time I would really like to get the signal from the team that is working on this in the back before I take any more debates on this.

[Pause while waiting for result.]

HOMER TRECARTIN: Mr. Chairman, the Nominating Committee officers have listened to the concern and feel that it's one that has already been dealt with, and so our motion still stands.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. Again, I will pause before we move forward.

I see on microphone 4 a point of order. I will take that, microphone 4.

MAINKA HOLGER: I would like to request for a secret ballot or secret vote for the election of the new president, because I feel it is inappropriate to use our voting cards.

PARDON MWANSA: OK. That is not a point of order. That is something that we'll come and consider at that stage if we need to, but it's not a point of order.

I see another point of order at microphone 3.

NEIL NEDLEY: I did have a point of order, but now it's been withdrawn as a result of the Nominating Committee report. But if you will allow me, I would like to ask for a question on the motion.

PARDON MWANSA: That is not allowed, and so we will proceed. Thank you. It's not a point of order, and it's where we are.

So we are back to the main motion on the floor. And if we are ready, we will vote. I see people needing to speak to this. Let's take Sadrail Saint-Ulysse on microphone 2.

SADRAIL SAINT-ULYSSE: Mr. Chair, I also would like to speak to the Nominating Committee, please.

PARDON MWANSA: I take it that that's the same request to refer this back to the Nominating Committee?

SADRAIL SAINT-ULYSSE: That is correct.

PARDON MWANSA: OK. I will put this to a test as to whether the main body would like this referred back. Because we might end up with people going back and coming back and going back and coming back. So I would like to see, by way of voting, whether the body senses this will be referred back.

HENRY MONCUR: May I say something?

PARDON MWANSA: To allow you to start saying something might preempt things that you need to speak to the Nominating Committee. The best I may do is give you an opportunity to put it in the form of a motion to say “I would like this to be referred.” That would make it something we can vote on.

HENRY MONCUR: I’d like to follow the same guidance earlier. And in keeping with the manual, I’d like to be given the same privilege.

PARDON MWANSA: I realize that this is unusual, and this is putting the house in an odd situation. But for the sake of being able to respect your observation and ours, I would really like it if this were in the form of a motion so that it could be voted up or down. The Nominating Committee chair and secretary did inform me that they had objections that were raised, but those have been looked at, and they have a sense that most of the things fall within that.

So unless it’s something unique, I’m reluctant to just say let’s refer it back.

HENRY MONCUR: Mr. Chairman, I’d like to be given the same privilege, as I stated earlier.

PARDON MWANSA: OK. Thank you. I will give you that. Please, let’s do that.

HENRY MONCUR: Thank you.

PARDON MWANSA: I have a point of order on microphone 2.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think it’s already been addressed. Thank you.

PARDON MWANSA: Family, it’s always good for us, as we go through these exercises, to follow the rules that we have outlined for us to do. So please bear with us when a person insists as has been insisted. It is fair that we do so. At this time we will wait—and I see a point of order on microphone 3 and 6.

At this point, I would like to hold on to that till we just get back from there, and then we will see how the Lord will guide us.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, the feeling of the officers is that these have already been dealt with, so our motion still stands.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. If the motion still stands, it's my judgment and intention that if we have any more requests for referrals, I will put them to a vote. That way, we don't keep going to and fro. We have to make some headway.

So we will take a point of order on microphone 5.

HENRY MONCUR: Mr. Chairman, I recommend that if there's any other objection to the motion being put on the floor, those who are objecting be given one more opportunity to go to the committee, and anyone who has an objection will voice it at that time rather than us going back and forth through this exercise.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. I appreciate your comment. Nobody has requested further referrals, so I will end it—I will take that as a comment.

Microphone 5, please. Microphone 5, nobody's speaking. There's no name. It simply says "point of order."

TREVOR GARDNER: Mr. Chairman, I withdrew because the speaker before said the exact same thing I was going to suggest.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you, sir. Again, I see a point of order. Microphone 3.

NEIL NEDLEY: Yes. The point of order is that when we nominate people for an office, it's the floor that decides yes or no. The only reason it should be taken back to Nominating Committee is if the individual is biblically disqualified for office.

So if there's a biblical disqualification—

PARDON MWANSA: I will not take that as a point of order. We take point of orders if it's a point of order. Thank you.

I don't see any other point of orders right now—

Well, there's one at microphone 6.

MAXWELL MUVWIMI: Mine is an innocent and honest observation.

PARDON MWANSA: OK, again I will not take that as a point of order. We'll go back to the main motion.

OK. I just have to respect our rules of orders and take a point of order when it is a point of order. I really appreciate your comments, the things you may want to say. But unless it's a point of order, I will not give you an opportunity when it's not a point of order. OK?

That brings us back to, with no point of orders, people that need to speak. We have them on several microphones. May I encourage you that if it is again a concern that you have or anything, be prepared that I will put it to a test with this house. And if there are any other comments, you can express them by the way you will vote, without necessarily us going through speeches as if this were a "for" or "against." So I see people still standing, so I'll go ahead and take microphone 4. Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH TALBOT: Elizabeth Talbot, North American Division.

I would like to make a motion that because of the magnitude of this decision, we go back to the secret voting through our electronic devices.

PARDON MWANSA: It's an appropriate motion.

Is it seconded? Is it seconded?

Seconded. We'll have to vote on that. OK.

The motion, if I have you correctly, is that we use a secret ballot?

ELIZABETH TALBOT: With the electronic devices. I don't know if you remember that Elder Jackson requested a second test this morning, and you said we would do it later, but we never did it.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. Since your motion is really that we vote using the electronic devices, I would like to remind us that this morning after our first test, we came with a clear observation

that our electronic test was not reliable enough for us to use, and we resorted to the use of cards. So we will use cards to vote. We will use cards. We will use other means if needed, but not the electronic one.

ELIZABETH TALBOT: But Elder Jackson of the North American Division raised the question back then that many of us voted before the clock was on the screen, and therefore this was not a done deal, so you said we would do it later before we voted in things that were of any magnitude. So this is, I believe, of great magnitude, so this is a good time to do that.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you for your comment. It's not our intention to use the electronic voter. Elder Jackson's comment was assuming that because of the lack of timing or the timing of voting, there could have been some whose votes may have been missed. But that is not something that has been verified to say that's what happened. So in that case, we will stick to the voting using this. And unless it is a request for secret vote—but we are not using the electronic vote.

ELIZABETH TALBOT: Is there a secret vote that can be done, another secret vote without the card?

PARDON MWANSA: Yes. We could do that. If that is made into a motion, we want to use secret votes by writing, we will do that.

ELIZABETH TALBOT: Then I will make the motion to use a secret vote of any type.

PARDON MWANSA: OK. Thank you. And is that motion seconded?

It's seconded.

We will simply go ahead and put that to test. We will simply vote that.

Please, the motion on the floor is to use a secret ballot as we vote on this.

I see a point of order on microphone 6. Microphone 6, please, point of order.

SVEN-INGE FRANTZEN: I would just ask that you be more vigilant in asking delegates and the people present not to applaud after comments and motions made, as that can affect the outcome of the vote.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. I will do that. May I request the house, please, to avoid applauding after comments are made. I appreciate your observation.

OK. Back to the motion. The motion is that we have a secret vote on this particular item. Are you ready to vote?

All those in favor of us voting by secret ballot only, show by raising your yellow cards.

OK. Those opposed, by the same.

Thank you. The motion fails.

Again, I plead with you, please contain your emotions. Let's not clap. The motion has failed.

We are back to the main motion on the floor.

We will take Israel. Microphone 3, Israel Kafeero.

OK. We will go to the next if Israel is not ready and take Joshua Shin, microphone 3.

OK. Again, I see no comment from Joshua, so we'll go to— Oh. We will go ahead and take Larry— OK. You are there. Thank you, Joshua. Go ahead, please.

JOSHUA SHIN: Excuse me, sir. Actually my concern was for the Secretariat report. I—

PARDON MWANSA: OK. Thank you so much. We appreciate it. We had your name here.

It takes me to Larry, microphone 2, please.

LARRY BOGGESS: Larry Boggess, North American Division.

I remember sitting in the GC building year-end meeting, and when it came to particular items or particular spots, there was a call for prayer. It seems to me we need prayer.

PARDON MWANSA: Thank you. I have a suggestion—oh, you're not done. Sorry about that.

LARRY BOGGESS: Because this is a worldwide church and the vote that we're about to take is for our worldwide leader, I think prayer is even more important. In addition to emphasizing the importance of prayer, I'd like to call a question on the previous question.

PARDON MWANSA: OK. Call on the previous question simply indicates that we cease to discuss and test if we are ready to vote.

Is the motion seconded?

It's seconded.

So we will vote on that.

What it means, if it passes, is that people who are standing on the microphones to speak will not be respected to speak; we will go straight to consider voting on the main motion.

Those who support the motion for previous question, to cease all discussion, please show by raising your yellow card. OK.

Thank you. Those opposed, by the same.

Thank you. The motion carries.

At this point we are now going to vote on the main motion, which is going to be read again by the secretary from the Nominating Committee. Please reread the motion.

LESLIE POLLARD: The recommendation of the Nominating Committee for the position of president of General Conference is the name of Dr. Ted N. C. Wilson.

PARDON MWANSA: OK. Please, after we vote, let's avoid clapping.

Those in favor of the motion brought to us on the floor as read from the Nominating Committee, please show by raising your yellow cards.

Thank you.

Those opposed, by the same.

The motion carries.

PARDON MWANSA: Elder Trecartin, I see you moving there. I was going—thank you for your patience. The item took us a long time, and we have passed the 12:00 noon that we had intended to close.

We are about to close now that we've taken this action. Please, if we can contain ourselves for a few more minutes, we will be done soon after prayer.

OK. At this time I would like to invite our president, Elder Ted Wilson, to walk in and be introduced.

[Applause.]

Ladies and gentlemen, our president, Brother Ted Wilson.

[Applause.]

TED N. C. WILSON: Please be seated for a moment.

I know that it is important that you go to lunch, and I will not speak long. But, my brothers and sisters, it's truly a humbling experience to address you here at this sixtieth General Conference session again, and I had prepared myself for either way, under God's guidance. I will refrain from any long-winded remarks because of the time, but I do want to share with you some strong convictions.

Our wonderful theme that we have—Arise! Shine! Jesus is coming!—must be the foundation of all that we do as we go into this new quinquennium. We want to see Jesus come.

This precious church was established by God Himself at the right time, in the right place, and for the right reason. Revelation 12:17, A people who keep commandments of God and keep the testimonies of Jesus. And it is with very quiet respect and humility that both of us stand here before you, before God, and we do accept this responsibility.

We cannot do anything of ourselves. And I want you to know that, as I have indicated before in meetings with my colleagues, I try not to see one day pass by without claiming the promise of James 1:5, to ask for wisdom from God. And I ask that you will continue to pray for us in this responsibility, as so many of you have been doing. Let me express how deeply gratified and appreciative we are as we travel around; many, many people tell us that they are praying. I want to tell you, brothers and sisters, we need

to pray for each other and pray together. Prayer will keep us together. And I appreciate the mention of that just recently.

We commit ourselves to following God's construction and the precious Word and in the Spirit of Prophecy and to walk daily with Him in Bible study and prayer, in a spirit of revival and reformation.

I will not take much more time to share with you, but I have three things that perhaps later on I can further illustrate and fortify, three things that I hope, building on the many things that we are doing already, so many powerful things that our departments are doing, that God is doing through many people. Our Mission to the Cities, comprehensive health ministry, revival and reformation, and so many other things. But as we go into this new quinquennium, I want us to remember in particular three important things.

First and foremost, I hope that all of us will completely and fully lift up Christ and His righteousness for us in all things.

Second, I want to ask all of us, by God's grace, to be faithful. Faithfulness to God's Word, faithfulness to this message, faithfulness to the calling that God has given to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. And third, it is of absolute importance that we have total member involvement and empowerment in witnessing and evangelism.

As we go forward, because I believe we're living in the very last days of earth's history, we see things around us that are absolutely cataclysmic, that are shaping our future immediately. We know that God intends for his people to stand faithful, but we have to do it together.

Laypersons, paid clergy, everyone working together, ministers and pastors and church members, there's one quotation I leave with you. I read one particular Spirit of Prophecy quotation that I want you to think about. It's found in *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 9, page 117: "The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the

work and unite their efforts with those ministers and church officers.” This is going to be a major, major emphasis and theme as we move ahead into this quinquennium.

And so, my brothers and sisters, it is Nancy’s and my humble privilege to work with you. I am so proud of this woman who stands by my side. She is a godly person. She is a strong Bible believer and Bible reader. She believes in the Spirit of Prophecy. She believes in prayer. And she knows how to correct me when I am wrong. She is a wonderful wife. I pledge to you today, by God’s grace, to look to Him every morning, every night, to ask for His guidance.

Brother Chair, thank you for the opportunity of accepting this through the blood and the grace of Jesus Christ. May God guide each one of us as we look forward: “Arise! Shine! Jesus is coming!”

PARDON MWANSA: We are about to pray. At this time, as we invite Brother Williams Jimenez from the Trans-European Division, to offer a closing prayer, I have an announcement.

Instead of reconvening at 1:30, we will reconvene at 2:00 p.m., 1400 hours. With that, we should all stand for closing prayer.

[Prayer.]