

FIFTH BUSINESS MEETING

Sixtieth General Conference session, July 5, 2015, 9:26 a.m.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Good morning. We are ready to begin our business session this morning and would like to invite all of the delegates to take their places so that we can proceed with the business this morning.

Thank you for taking your places.

As we convene this morning, I'm reminded of the counsel that was given by Paul to the Corinthians. And this, of course, was in the context of washing, but I find the counsel appropriate for our business here as well. And I read in 1 Corinthians 14:26: "What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? . . . Everything must be done so that the church may be built up" [NIV]. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.

I believe we are in the business of building the church of God, the body of Jesus Christ.

What a privilege is ours this morning.

I also would like to read from *Gospel Workers*, page 446, the following: "In all our business meetings, as well as our social and religious meetings, we want Jesus by our side as a guide and a counselor. . . . There will be a realization of the importance of the work that is to be done. There will be a desire that the plans to be laid may be directed by Him who is mighty in counsel."

It's for that reason, therefore, that I would like to request Lynn at this moment to lead us in a session of prayer.

LYNN RIPLEY: We have met in a wonderful Sabbath experience an opportunity to practice for our first worship service in heaven before the heavenly throne. The blessed hope brings us together. And I know each of you have been much in prayer over the past 100 days and even before, and the prayer continues in our prayer room and even on this floor and in this building.

This place has been claimed for God's glory and His mission. This morning, as I prayed on this very floor in preparation for our devotional time, I wondered what God might do, how He would empower our mission and how our voices invited into service for Him, even as we have accepted His call to salvation.

And I was reading from Revelation 14. And I claimed again verse 12, where it says, "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" [NKJV]. May we all be faithful. May we follow His commands, and may we be a witness to Him.

Today I would invite us to focus on hearing His voice clearly, that we will set aside any of the other things, the trauma of life, the joy and demands of life, the business of this session, and hear His voice more fully. Revelation 14:2 tells us that it is a beautiful voice, the sound of many waters and of loud thunder but also the still whispering.

And as you bow in groups of two or three, would you ask that God speak directly to your heart? Will you pray for each other that His will be done in salvation and witness through each individual that meets in this dome? And for those who watch on the Hope Channel and for our members and those who soon will be members around the globe, may we follow only the Holy Spirit and His voice, and may He make fruitful our witness.

Would you bow in prayer? We will pray for two or three minutes, and then I will close with prayer. Shall we bow now by two or three?

[Prayer.]

Dear Father, You have heard our voices. Thank You for accepting each of us, calling us to salvation in Jesus Christ. May we each, Father, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, hear that assurance, may we know that Your call is on our lives. May we recognize that our unity of need also leads the way to our unity of purpose.

Your plan for us is to sing before Your throne with a great multitude of those who have heard Your voice through our witness. The wonder of that, Father, is so amazing. This morning as the organist and the pianist played, we heard “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring,” that we might praise You, and we hope to sing before Your throne and glorify You. May we understand how fully each of our voices are needed in witness. Young adults, older ones, women and men, all precious in Your sight, all called to service for You, may we be courageous because You have called, may we be willing, because we have heard Your voice, and that You have anointed each of us with a purpose, an anointing of the Holy Spirit to Your glory. Lord, we want to go home. This is an amazing time of fellowship and business, and we ask Your anointing on the business of this session.

Thank You for each leader that will guide us as we make decisions.

Father, we hear Your voice clearly through the Holy Spirit to honor You, and may that mission may be strengthening. We thank You for speaking to each of our hearts today, and we thank You that the Holy Spirit attends and fills this auditorium. Help us not to wander in the wilderness. May we be courageous for You, and may we glorify You soon in the heavenly courts because You are worthy. In Jesus’ precious name, amen.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much. Lynn Ripley is from the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, and she has led us in the prayer session. And on the platform today, we have Tammy Boward as our recording secretary, we have Dr. Rosa Banks as our secretary today, and Todd McFarland as our parliamentarian.

Again, I welcome you to the business session. And before we go into the agenda of today, let me give an announcement. We are asking all the delegates to bring with them their electronic voting devices, because, as earlier indicated, there will be another testing of the electronic gadgets later this morning or earlier in the afternoon. So please be sure to have with you the electronic voting gadgets.

We want also all the delegates to be informed that all of the official authorized materials for this session will be distributed right here in the meeting hall. That's where you get the official authorized materials for this session. That is important for you to note, because you will find a lot of materials probably distributed elsewhere. So this is important for us to note.

All right. We have special music.

[Song.]

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much, Garcon Raul Perra, for the beautiful music. I notice on microphone 3 we have a point of order from Jeroen Tuinstra.

JEROEN TUINSTRA: Mr. Chairman. Good morning, delegates. I have a point of order with regard to making a point of order.

Yesterday I tried to make a point of order because the question was called, and it was unclear whether there was a two-thirds majority vote. At the place where you scan in, I was handed a telephone to actually explain to someone behind the stage what my point of order was. And I had to actually argue with the person behind the stage in order to get the point of order through, yet voting just went ahead.

There seems to be confusion. If I want to make a point of order, do I first have to call someone, justify that I want to make a point of order, and then also explain or argue with a person behind the stage in order to get my point of order through? Luckily, I didn't have to do that this morning, but is this a normal procedure or not?

GEOFFREY MBWANA: The procedure is if you have a point of order, you would come to the station where the microphone you choose to speak to is, scan your card there, indicate to the person at the station that you have a point of order, and the chair will recognize you.

JEROEN TUINSTRA: Why was I not given that privilege yesterday and I had to call someone behind the stage first?

GEOFFREY MBWANA: All right. This is the procedure we will follow, and it's the procedure that we did arrange from the beginning.

JEROEN TUINSTRA: So my point of order of yesterday was not put on the floor because . . . ?

GEOFFREY MBWANA: I'm sorry that there was that confusion, but we will proceed as I have indicated.

JEROEN TUINSTRA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. Now, in regard to preliminary information—I will remind us again, when the floor is open for discussion, at the appropriate time when you're invited to speak, please go to one of the six microphones that are in the hall. Be sure to carry with you your badge, scan your badge with the person at the station on the microphone where you will be speaking to. And if you have a point of order, please indicate to the person at the station that you have a point of order. It will help us recognize that in the system. We have translations going on. So as you participate in the discussions, please keep in mind that we have translations going on, so be as clear and loud as is possible, but also don't speak too fast, so that we can allow some time for the translators to do the translation.

We would like to expedite the process of processing the agenda without denying the delegates due time to have their input, but we have not set time limits. We still encourage you to be precise, brief. If the point you wish to make has been presented already, please yield your position or your time to somebody else so that we can facilitate the agenda faster.

We would continue today to vote using our yellow cards, which all delegates have.

This morning we will take the *Church Manual* items as presented on your agenda sheets. And the items, they begin on page 90.

But before we do that, let me say that when the Nominating Committee is ready to render its report anytime during the session this morning, we will interrupt the discussions on the floor at that moment to receive the report. The Nominating Committee is working in the constraints of time and would

like to maximize its time, and therefore, please bear with us when we interrupt to allow the Nominating Committee to render its report.

The sessions this morning are scheduled. We're aiming at ending at 12:00 this morning.

With those remarks, we are ready to proceed with the agenda for today. And I would like to invite at this moment Elder Armando Miranda to give us some preliminary information before we go into the agenda.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It seems to me it is appropriate and perhaps necessary to remind the delegates of the procedure that goes on in order to review the suggestions that come to the General Conference *Church Manual* Committee. This is important, because in some cases there are some people who question the way we are proceeding here. But there is a procedure that we follow during the quinquennium.

And I am going to refer to the current *Church Manual*, 2010 edition, page 19, where it says, "If a local church conference or union conference mission wishes to propose a *Church Manual* revision, it shall submit its proposal to the next constituent level for counsel and study. If that level approves the proposal, it submits the suggested revision to the next level for additional evaluation. If the various levels approve the proposal, it eventually comes before the General Conference *Church Manual* Committee, which considers all recommendations. If the *Church Manual* Committee approves a revision, it is prepared for the presentation at an Annual Council and/or a General Conference session."

So that's a way how the different suggestions of changes in the *Church Manual* Committee follow the different levels of the church. So apart from that, you may recall that at the beginning of this session we approved and appointed the standing *Church Manual* Committee.

Some discussion and some of the recommendations that we are bringing to you, if considered appropriate, may be referred back to the *Church Manual* Committee, if the majority approve that. And

we're going to call the members of the *Church Manual* Committee to meet with us in order to discuss and then come back with the proposal.

So, Brother Chairman, this is the way how we will proceed in the *Church Manual* Committee.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. Thank you, Elder Armando. And I think, with that, we are ready, then, to go into the agenda for today.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: I am going to ask the secretary of the *Church Manual* Committee to introduce the first item that we are ready to present to you.

Brother Harald.

HARALD WOLLAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will proceed with the items. And just to make sure you know where you find them, it is agenda number 401 and all the way to 426, but we'll take them one by one.

The first item has the heading "Church Organizations Today." And this is just a clarification of what is the difference between the *Church Manual* and the *Working Policy* of the General Conference.

And if you look on your material, on item 401 from line 14 to 16, the addition, which is the clarification, reads, "The *Church Manual* applies this principle of representation to the operations of the local congregation. General Conference *Working Policy* addresses how this principally functions in the rest of denominational structure."

I'd like to move this.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. It's been moved. Do we have a second?

Seconded. Thank you.

OK. Any comments? observations? questions? If you have any, please walk to the station with your badge and register. Your name will appear here, and we will recognize you.

OK. We have on microphone 2 Jay Gallimore from the North American Division.

JAY GALLIMORE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm a little uncomfortable with this, because it separates out the *Working Policy* of the General Conference from the *Church Manual*, understanding that they're applying the principle of representative church government. But the *Church Manual* covers far more than simply the local church. I would be a lot more comfortable with this if it said, "The *Working Policy*, in harmony or concert with the *Church Manual*." The *Working Policy* is not subject to this body, and it's the dichotomy that bothers me here.

So I would like to see something that would say "the *Working Policy* in harmony and principle with the *Church Manual*." I don't know if you want a motion to refer that back to the *Church Manual* Committee or how it should proceed, Brother Chairman.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. Let's see if we have an observation. If you're not satisfied with that, we may take a motion.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Mr. Chairman, it is clear that the *Church Manual* applies to the local church only. It's how the church has structured the way of administration at this level, at the level of the local church. Of course, the *Church Manual* is just always referring and respecting the structure of the church. But it exists just for the local church in harmony with the policies of the church in general.

We can just add the suggested recommendation; it seems to me that there is no problem with that. But, basically, the *Church Manual* is applied to the *Church Manual* and respects the policies of the church and the different levels.

HARALD WOLLAN: Mr. Chairman?

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Yes, please.

HARALD WOLLAN: I can understand the concern that Elder Gallimore presents here. But I think the wording already takes this into account, because it talks about the principle of representation and the principle of how the *Church Manual* generally speaks to the local church and the principle of using

the *Working Policy* for the wider organization. When it talks about delegates going to a session, it deals with people coming from the local church, instructing them.

So I think we have the same principle, and one shouldn't interfere with the other.

JAY GALLIMORE: Brother Chairman, I did note the principle, but it still creates the dichotomy. And I appreciate the suggestion that maybe we could go ahead and put in something that is in harmony, and I would like to see that done. And so I don't know how you want me to proceed here.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. You may proceed—

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Brother Chairman, sorry to interrupt. But I would like to read from *Church Manual*, page 18, "Authority and Function of the *Church Manual*." And it says, "The *Church Manual* has existed in its current format since 1932. It describes the operation and functions of local churches and their relationship to the denominational structures in which they hold membership."

So here is the description of the relationship with the different structures of the church.

JAY GALLIMORE: All right. I think the *Church Manual* chairperson was suggesting that he has no problem putting that "harmony" word in there, however you want to put it. And I'd like to see that accomplished, because I think it will strengthen that. We want harmony between the *Working Policy* and the *Church Manual*, and not dichotomy. We don't want one set of rules—we understand the *Working Policy* is a lot more complicated, but there should be at least a harmony in principle.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much. We will take note of that and have this item taken to the *Church Manual* Committee and see next time how it comes back.

Yes. I see on microphone 4 we have Mario Veloso. Mario Veloso, please.

MARIO VELOSO: Thank you, Brother Chairman.

I first would like to thank the Secretariat of the General Conference, because they put together all of these items and the material beforehand for us to read them properly. That is a real help for the conversation that we have here.

The motion to change the wording related to the representation on separating—practically the *Church Manual* just for the local church and the *Working Policy* for the rest of the organization poses difficulty whenever an interpretation will come in the future, and this dichotomy is really a problem for the church.

We have never had this before. We all understood clearly the role of the *Working Policy*. But reducing the *Church Manual* to only for the local church brings this situation that we have many links in the *Church Manual* to the entire church. How is that going to operate if we separate them?

There is also the problem that the fundamental beliefs are in the *Church Manual*. And if this is only for the local church, what is going to happen with the handling of any changes in the future? Somebody may come up with the idea that this body has no authority or whatever. Somebody could try to change the *Church Manual* at the local level or at the church or at the conference, and then the authority is confused.

The way it reads as it is now is clearer. And I would like to support the concept of making it clear that both are interpreted in a way that they are in harmony and they are for the whole church. Because also in the *Working Policy* are items that make a link with the *Church Manual*, and that link we should not destroy.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Brother Chairman?

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Yes.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: If you allow me. I understand the concern the two speakers have expressed. But again, I would like to go back to the *Church Manual*. And on page 18 it says, “The *Church Manual* also expresses the church’s understanding of Christian life and church governance and discipline based on biblical principles and the authority of duly assembled General Conference sessions.”

So it includes the authority of the church, even at this level, which is the highest authority for the church on earth.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you.

MARIO VELOSO: Brother Chairman, I understand that, and it is quite clear. But this addition will create a confusion with that general concept. We would have internal contradictions in the *Church Manual*, and you know any document with internal contradictions poses problems.

So the second addition, which make a sharper separation, would prevail in any contention or discussion about the item.

We better have both in harmony.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. I will recognize a point of order from Roscoe Howard from the North American Division, microphone 3.

ROSCOE HOWARD: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I'm concerned about the procedure that we're taking. I think there needs to be a formal motion to refer this back to the committee if we're going to vote on this. And I believe only the body has the right to actually change the document, and so one individual cannot just say, I'd like to see this changed. The body has to make an actual motion, and this body has to vote whether or not we want to refer it back.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: That is a good point of order. The chair will take note of that.

At this point, let me continue to register additional comments on the item, and then we'll entertain a motion to refer back.

Yes. Microphone 2, Louis Torres.

LOUIS TORRES: Mr. Chairman, I'm also concerned about the wording, the dichotomy. Since it is mentioned in the *Church Manual*, then there's no problem in mentioning it in this writing. Therefore, I move that it be referred back to insert the corrected language that would join both this wording with the *Church Manual*. Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: The chair recognizes the motion.

Is there a second?

Thank you. There is a second.

All in favor to refer this idea back to the *Church Manual* Committee, please indicate your favor by raising your card.

Thank you.

Opposed by the same sign.

Thank you.

The item carries. It will be referred back to the *Church Manual* Committee.

We encourage those who have brought their points: if you would like to meet with the standing committee, you are free to express your concerns.

With that I think we are ready to move on to the next item.

HARALD WOLLAN: Item 402, Mr. Chairman, deals with when and how to deal with appeals. As the *Church Manual* is written today, it indicates that an individual can appeal and continue to appeal every step of the organization until the General Conference session. In order for us to make sure that an item can be dealt with efficiently and without taking the attention of every organizational step, the suggestion that we bring to you is to bring this in harmony with the General Conference *Working Policy*.

So the changed wording you will find from line 24 to line 34. And it reads, "When differences arise in or between churches and conferences or institutions, it is proper to appeal to the next-higher organization not directly involved in the matter. The decision of the organization to which the matter was referred shall be final unless that organization itself chooses to refer the matter with comments and recommendation to the division or General Conference Executive Committee/General Conference session. During the interim between sessions, the General Conference Executive Committee at Annual Council shall constitute the body of final authority on all questions where a difference of viewpoints has

been referred. Its decisions shall control on controverted points, but at the request of the division executive committee concerned, such a decision may be reviewed at a General Conference session.”

I'd like to move this.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: It has been moved. Is there a second?

Thank you very much. Any comments of the divisions? Please, you can go to the microphone.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Brother Chairman.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Yes, please.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: We are bringing this change to the *Church Manual* to be similar to the *Working Policy*.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. Microphone 2, Jim Howard from the North American Division.

JIM HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have some concerns about this particular change, to the *Church Manual*. It appears that however it was put together, it was with a certain measure of confidence that there will never be a case where a conference or union conference or institution would do something different from what was voted by this body in session.

However, it perhaps was not reviewed by anyone who was a part of a church that was in a situation where they were within a conference or a union or institution, connected to an institution, where they did do something very contrary to what this body has agreed on, whether it's in beliefs, practices, or policies.

This seems to take any ability of appeal away from an individual church that may be in a situation like that, where their local conference is actually doing something very contrary to what this world church body has voted. And there is nothing they can do about it, because at that point that conference or union can simply say, “We choose not to allow this to go to a higher level,” and there is then no level of appeal allowed.

Even in our governments, they understand there must be the ability, for a matter of fairness, for those in the lowest levels to be able to make that appeal go all the way to the highest levels.

So I would strongly recommend that this be dropped altogether and that this be left as is, that this body simply vote no to this recommendation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. Microphone 5, Henry Moncur from the Inter-American Division.

HENRY MONCUR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My concern is similar, Mr. Chairman. It seems to me that we are seeking to limit the ability of an individual to take an appeal forward in the event that you may have a conference administration. And I think that what needs to transpire, even if somehow we hold it at Annual Council, is that we should be able to allow an appeal to move forward if an individual or organization does not somehow get what is, they feel, the right perspective on their concern, whether it's on a church level or conference level. Because if you have a conference level that does not want to carry the appeal forward, it can challenge our whole system.

So if you will allow me, I would like to move that we refer this back to the *Church Manual* Committee for them to relook at this issue, please.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Brother Chairman, just to make the clarification that, in this case, we are not talking about individuals. We are talking about the differences in or between churches and conferences or institutions. We are not talking about the right of individuals.

HENRY MONCUR: Mr. Chairman, I understand that, and that's why I'm saying, even if you have a church that appeals to a conference, and a conference somehow feels that they don't want to carry it any further, that church is limited in how they can be able to have that matter resolved. And so, yes, I

understand it's not the individual, it's the organization; but it still has the same challenge in terms of an organization being limited by what one other organization higher up may be able to do with their appeal.

And so I come back, Mr. Chairman, to the motion that we refer this matter back for the committee for them to look at it, please.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: The chair has a request. And it recognizes your point and your motion and would like to entertain it, but I realize we have people on microphones who may have some other concerns that may need to be included as well. Could we hold your motion a little until others have spoken, and then we can take it up? Would that be OK with you?

HENRY MONCUR: Fair enough.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Just to give a fair time to the others.

HENRY MONCUR: Fair enough. Fair enough.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much.

Next on the list here we have Mbulelo Nqumse, microphone 6.

MBULELO NQUMSE: The first point I would like to get clarity on is whether this amendment has done away with an individual first making his or her appeal to the local church.

HARALD WOLLAN: Mr. Chairman, it is obvious that the individual's first line of appeal should be the local church.

MBULELO NQUMSE: A follow-up, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

I find this quite very strange. And I say so because this church subscribes to the rules of natural justice. Conventionally, it is abnormal that you lord your appeal to the tribunal back to the first verdict. Naturally, that tribunal has made its decision, and therefore it is a higher tribunal that would be viewed objective to look at the merits of your appeal.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Well, thank you for your concern. We will take note of that.

MBULELO NQUMSE: Just one last point, Mr. Chair?

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Yes, please.

MBULELO NQUMSE: I note the fact that our manual does not prescribe time frames regarding the appeals. How long does an appeal lie in an appeal forum?

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Well, that does not speak to the motion on the floor, so I suggest that it be addressed through the normal protocol of addressing *Church Manual* adjustments and changes.

MBULELO NQUMSE: Can I, therefore, suggest, Mr. Chair, that this matter also be referred to the committee to look at?

GEOFFREY MBWANA: There is a specific protocol that is identified in the *Church Manual* that you can use, to process any suggestions you may have.

MBULELO NQUMSE: Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: And we will follow that.

MBULELO NQUMSE: Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Microphone 4, Eugen Hartwich from the Inter-European Division.

EUGEN HARTWICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm also concerned with this amendment. During the explanation it was said that it is important to bring the *Church Manual* into harmony with the *Working Policy*. I understand that the *Church Manual* is higher in authority than the *Working Policy*, because the *Church Manual* can only be amended in this body, while the *Working Policy* can also be amended at the GC Executive Committee. So it would be better to bring the *Working Policy* into harmony with the *Church Manual*, not vice versa. And there should be always a possibility to appeal to the highest authority, which is the General Conference.

So when Ellen White says here in line 39, "But when, in the General Conference, the judgment of the brethren assembled from all parts of the field is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be stubbornly maintained but surrendered," how can it not be stubbornly maintained but surrendered if it never reaches the General Conference?

So, please, I would encourage us here all to keep with what we have right now and not amend it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much. Microphone 2, Louis Torres.

LOUIS TORRES: Thank you again, Mr. Chairman.

I love my country. I'm a chaplain with the police department. And one of the things we do in justice is allow the prerogative of appeal. If the civil government, which is lower than the spiritual government, allows for appeals, then we as a church should do likewise.

Therefore, I strongly encourage and support the motion to take it back and to leave it as it is. If the change should be made, it should be made in harmony with the rights that people have to appeal.

Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. We noted that. Microphone 6, Paul Ratsara.

PAUL RATSARA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too I have a big concern with this amendment. What we need is a stronger policy to put us together. So the way it is, it has been a great help for the church. So I strongly also advocate the fact that we need to refer this back and leave it the way it is. It has helped us, and we need it nonamended in the future.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. Thank you very much. I have three other individuals on the microphone. And we recognize at this time microphone 3, Neil Nedley from the General Conference.

NEIL NEDLEY: Yes. I'm a GC delegate from the North American Division, and I am a layperson. So I have a couple of questions, but first a statement before the questions.

If we have a court system that, after making a decision, says that they will not allow an appeal, we are actually setting ourselves up for massive disunity. We should always have the ability to take it to the highest level.

Now, two questions in regard to why this change was recommended. First: Is the General Conference Executive Committee getting many requests for appeal that they feel that they are being overwhelmed by and thus cannot handle it?

Second: If they are being overwhelmed, the highest level has the authority to state, “We will not receive this appeal and consider it, but will allow the lower level’s decision to stand,” just as the Supreme Court does in the United States.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much, Neil. The questions that were posed—

HARALD WOLLAN: I will just briefly mention, Dr. Nedley, a short correction. There is an opportunity of appeal, but we are talking about bringing the appeal all the way through. Otherwise, I can follow your argumentation.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: On the other hand, Brother Chairman, we are just basically aligning the *Church Manual* with the policy. And we are not basically changing, just aligning, and not denying the right for the churches to appeal. The General Conference is not overwhelmed with the amount of appeals. That is not the reason we are bringing this to you.

This is a recommendation from one of the divisions to follow the regular procedures. And then we discussed with the *Church Manual* Committee the representation of each one of the divisions. So it’s not the group of the General Conference office. It’s just the world *Church Manual* Committee.

HARALD WOLLAN: Dr. Nedley, sorry. I failed to respond to your first question. We are not overwhelmed by appeals.

NEIL NEDLEY: Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. Microphone 2, Larry Boggess from the North American Division.

LARRY BOGGESS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the GC body for making this material available to us before GC time. I too am very concerned about what I see being recommended, and I would support it being sent back to the committee.

It's becoming a time of strict interpretation in courts of law, and they pay very particular attention to how it is worded. And if it isn't worded correctly, you lose. And so I think it's very vital that we have it very plain as to how we make our appeals and have it documented step by step.

And so I am very concerned about some of the changes that are being made here, because it seems to me that we're trying to cut away the steps of appeal and also the power of governance.

And so, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to call question on the motion that it be referred back.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. The question has been called.

OK. I have been assisted here. I already announced that we would like to receive input before I receive a motion, and I see two other individuals on the microphone. So let me request the previous speaker to please bear with me as I take these two more comments, and then I will accept a motion to refer the matter back.

Microphone 4, Gerry Karst.

GERRY KARST: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I listen to the discussion, I'm reminded that, in the *Working Policy*, there is a conflict—and dispute—resolution policy that clearly outlines all the levels of appeal that an individual or an organization can be involved in. And if this is being referred back, it may be useful to the *Church Manual* Committee to cross-reference the *Working Policy*, perhaps even make mention of it in the *Church Manual*. Some of the concerns that have been raised here are covered in that conflict and resolution policy. So I offer it as a suggestion to the committee.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much. Very helpful.

And, finally, we have on the list here microphone 6, Elder Israel Leito, Inter-American Division.

ISRAEL LEITO: Mr. Chair, as a member of the *Church Manual* Committee, I stand with the wording as it is. I believe it needs to be explained: We are not dealing here with individual appeals. That is clearly stated in the *Church Manual* and in the *Working Policy*. When an individual worker, an employee of the church, has a problem, it does not pass to the conference level.

Here we are talking about differences of opinion between organizations, a church with a conference, and how to deal with that kind of thing. I believe the wording here strengthens the appeal process by opening it wider, that this can reach up to the General Conference in session when there are differences of opinion between organizations.

And the discussions that I'm hearing are always referring back to the individual. And if you read our manual and our policy carefully, you will notice there is ample provision for individual appeals, not the regular church member that reaches only to the conference level, but employees, how to appeal up to the division level.

But when it comes to the organizational level, then it may even reach this point. And this is all that the *Church Manual* Committee is trying to explain, amplify, and make it easier for organizational disputes to be resolved even at this level.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much. The chair had also recognized earlier that there were intentions to make a motion to refer this back. And the chair would like to recognize that motion at this moment without necessarily going back to the microphone.

Is there a second to that motion?

Thank you.

All in favor? The motion is to refer this item back to the standing committee of the *Church Manual*, to take the concerns that were expressed here on the floor.

OK. All in favor of referring back the item.

Thank you.

Opposed, by the same sign.

I think the motion carries. The motion carries, and we'll refer this back to the standing committee.

HARALD WOLLAN: The next item is number 403. And it is just to bring the harmony of the *Church Manual* in the way we use the word "pastor." In some places, we use the word "minister," in some the word "pastor." We are suggesting to, throughout the manual, use the word "pastor" instead of "minister." So on line 9 the suggestion we bring to you is instead of "licensed ministers," use "licensed pastors." And this goes through the whole page. And the items where changes are suggested are underlined. I'd like to move that we use the word "pastor" in this particular document but throughout the manual.

I so move.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. It has been moved.

Is there a second? I see a second. Thank you.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Brother Chairman?

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Yes.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Just to be consistent with the terms that we use in the *Church Manual*. On page 20 we define some of the terms we are using throughout the *Church Manual*, and the use of "pastor" or "minister" is one of the words. And in this regard, it says on page 21, "Pastors referred to in this manual are those who have been appointed by the conference to oversee the affairs of the local church or district." That's the reason we are just bringing this to you, to be consistent.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. Based on our experience in the previous item, the chair would like to advise that if, as you stand at the microphone, you see a number of others at the microphones and you wish to move the item to be referred back, I would advise that you be sensitive to those who are at the

microphones, delay your desire to have the item referred back, just to give a little time to others so that we can get more input.

I see others at the microphones. Microphone 4, Mario Veloso.

MARIO VELOSO: Thank you, Brother Chairman. This change that we have here is much more than just changing the word “minister” to “pastor.” It actually changes the language, too. And the language is coming now as gender-inclusive, eliminating entirely the phrase “to give men” and changing it to “to give individuals.”

So there are two items. One is the change that, to me, it is a little bit too fast to do it. We have the item to be discussed on Wednesday, and we should wait until after Wednesday if we will go into the inclusive language or not. That is one item.

The other one, the pastors or ministers. If we read Ellen G. White, we find a clear difference between the office of minister and the gift of pastoring. So in making this change, we would somehow be a little bit awkward with that language of the Spirit of Prophecy. It would make us a little bit too close for any solution that we would need on creating some other offices beside this senior minister of the church.

So I would not make a motion at this point, Brother Chairman. But if you need one at any time, I would be willing to do it. Thank you very much.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much for your understanding.

Microphone 5, Clinton Wahlen.

CLINTON WAHLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I agree with the concerns that have been expressed. I think the language, actually, that is present now in the *Church Manual* is far clearer. Based on the study of ordination that we have done over the past several years, I think it's clear that our pioneers—including James White—did not prefer the word “pastor.” They understood that to refer to more the idea of a settled pastor who is exercising gifts of pastoring, and they preferred the word “minister.” And I would recommend that if consistency is desired,

we should make it consistent by retaining the word “minister” when referring to an office and “pastoring” when we refer to the gift of pastoring.

My wife and I have published a book called *Women’s Ordination: Does It Matter?* and there’s an entire section that deals with this matter. And I would refer the delegates who are interested to womensordination.com, where they can refer more fully to this matter. Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. Microphone 6, Qedumusa Mathonsi from the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

QEDUMUSA MATHONSI: I would like to reiterate the points that have been made by previous speakers that I thought the wording on line 9 was preemptive, especially in the light of the discussions on Wednesday. And so I agree with the rest that let’s wait until we agree whether we want to be inclusive in language.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much.

The next speaker is microphone 4, Gerard Damsteegt, General Conference.

GERARD DAMSTEEGT: Mr. Chairman, the Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC) papers are recommended to be studied by every delegate. In those TOSC papers, we discovered that there is a clear distinction between ministers and pastors.

If you study the book of Ephesians, you’ll find that pastoring is a gift, teaching is a gift, apostleship is a gift, prophecy is a gift; but minister is an elective office right from the very, very beginning. In fact, our people, our pioneers, made a distinction between two types of elders: One is the local elder; the next one is the one who had oversight over a number of churches. It was a traveling elder, which is called now “minister.”

And so when Ellen White talks about those things, she doesn’t have in mind an office of pastor, but a function, a gift.

At the same time, if you eliminate this, if you accept this motion, there is nothing anymore in the *Church Manual* that refers to ministers as men.

So this is a very, very important change that many may not understand. But if you keep it in mind in the light of the Bible, and the Bible only, you see that pastor is a gift; ministers need to have this gift, but at the same time they need also the gift of overseeing.

And so keep in mind that this is a very important point.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Brother Chairman—

GEOFFREY MBWANA: There is a point of order on microphone 6, Israel Leito, Inter-American Division.

ISRAEL LEITO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to ask your intervention to protect this group from nonofficial commercials.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: The chair accepts that and would like to advise all the speakers not to indulge in any commercial promotions on items while we are doing the business of the session. Thank you very much.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: And, Brother Chairman, if you allow me, just for a clarification.

At the GC session in 2010 we accepted and voted the terms used in the *Church Manual*. And it is in the *Church Manual* the different use of the words “pastor” and “minister,” so it’s already there. The other thing we are bringing to you today is to align this section of the *Church Manual* with the terms we already voted in 2010. Perhaps the only thing we need to perhaps review, if the group is not comfortable with that, is on line 9, “Licensed pastor,” the phrase “to give individuals.” That’s the only phrase. The use of the word “pastors” has already been accepted and voted into the *Church Manual* in 2010.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. And may I also request to the delegates, as points are being made, let’s refrain from applauding. I would appreciate that.

We also have another point of order on microphone 5, Angel Rodriguez.

ANGEL RODRIGUEZ: Brother Chairman, the discussion on the ordination of women to the ministry or not should be left for Wednesday. The arguments presented by people on one side of the issue have been also answered by people on the other side of the question.

So I will ask the chair to rule out any attempt to transform the discussion of this item into a discussion of the ordination of women to the ministry. Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. And the chair will do his best to control that.

OK. Microphone 2, Daniel Jackson, North American Division.

DANIEL JACKSON: Good morning.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Good morning.

DANIEL JACKSON: Here we all are. And with all due respect and love extended to my brethren, I have two points.

First: This item is not referencing women's ordination at all. This item is a general statement about the licensure that is extended to those who are being given the opportunity to expand the ministerial gift and to grow it.

Second—and I think we need to be very, very clear that by being inclusive here, we are recognizing the policies of the General Conference that allow for women to serve as pastors. There is no linkage in the discussion that will be undertaken on Wednesday between women's ordination and female pastors. And I think we need to understand that very clearly. I know some would wish otherwise.

But in a technical sense, that which will take place on Wednesday should not even be a discussion on women's ordination but rather that divisions be given the opportunity to review this matter and to either approve it or disapprove it, as is the need in their particular division.

So, with all due respect, I appreciate what has been said, but the reality is that this discussion today really has nothing to do with anything other than licensure, as I see it. Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much.

We move to microphone 6, Samuel Davis, from the Trans-European Division.

SAMUEL DAVIS: Yes, Brother Chair. I think Elder Jackson has said much of what I want to say, but let me just remind the delegates that many of us delegates have female pastors who are working for us, and regardless of the vote on Wednesday, they will continue to work for us after this session concludes. We need to, therefore, be gender-inclusive, and I welcome this amendment.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. We move to microphone 3, Jeroen Tuenstra from—I see, it changed here. OK. Let me go to microphone 4. Sorry. There was a change here.

Microphone 4, Elizabeth Talbot, North American Division.

ELIZABETH TALBOT: Yes. Mr. Chairman, regarding the same points of the last two comments, I want to remind the delegates that in 1985, 30 years ago, already we voted on the fact that there could be licensed women pastors, and that is not on the floor at this time, and neither will it be on Wednesday.

So many of us who have been pastors, in my case for 15 years, have been pastors within the General Conference-approved position of licensed commissioned pastors.

So at this time, any discussion that takes us out of that should not be taken by the chair, because it's not the discussion on the floor. And, actually, for a movement that was to go forward, we can't go backwards 30 years on this.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. I have about eight more individuals on the microphone. As I see us begin to repeat ourselves, I may make a request that unless you have something different than has already been mentioned, we would like to proceed after the last person on the list.

The next is microphone 2, Mike Cauley, North American Division.

MIKE CAULEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to humbly ask that our world church understand that we are a global south church today. North America, Europe, Australia has very little

representation in the decisions that are made. And in the case of female pastors, please allow us to view it from our culture as well as others' culture.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. Next on our list is Ammaran Williams.

AMMARAN WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

So as not to repeat what others have said, I would just like to add that in the future, as we deal with these items, we get a more vigorous explanation from the persons concerned, especially with background information about the rationale for these changes, so that it would avoid a lot of the discussion and we can move the process along. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you for the advice.

Next on the list is microphone 3, Shirley Chang, North American Division.

SHIRLEY CHANG: In view of the previous discussions, in which I was going to be redundant, I'd like to move the previous question.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Based on the advice that I requested, if you don't mind . . .

Is there a second to that?

LOUIS TORRES: Mr. Chairman? This a point of order. We have been requested not to make motions until everybody has an opportunity to speak. There are others who wanted to make motions before, and to now quit—stop discussion—

GEOFFREY MBWANA: I don't have a point of order here with me on the list, so . . .

OK. I think the motion that was made is a new order. We could process that, and if you would like to make a motion after that, we would take it.

OK. The motion does not allow for discussion. We will proceed to take a vote.

Let me make an appeal to the person who made a motion, in honor of a commitment I made previously, which I would like to honor. And that is, Shirley, if you would allow me to entertain a motion

I promised previously that I would entertain, which would possibly have the same effect, if you don't mind. Shirley Chang?

SHIRLEY CHANG: Actually, I do mind, because I believe we are being redundant. But if this is what the chair wants to do, I will back off of it.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you for your understanding. I have a few individuals in line, but the individuals in line will also help me because we don't want to repeat; we want to move on. And it would be helpful.

I notice that we have repetitions. And therefore, if at this point I realize somebody would make a motion to the effect of referring back as what was earlier being mentioned, I would entertain that.

Next on the—oh. Yes. We have a point of order. Louis Torres, it's now appearing. Thank you.

LOUIS TORRES: Thank you. And I'm glad that you did honor the point of order, because you had requested no motions until everybody had the opportunity to speak.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: And I'm sorry for that slip that I made.

LOUIS TORRES: Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. Next on the list is again—oh. Yes. You were on the point of order. You could proceed to make your point if you wish. Louis Torres, microphone 2. Oh. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry.

Mario Veloso. This is a point of order again.

MARIO VELOSO: Brother Chairman, when I spoke before, I said that I would like to make a motion later on after the discussion. Would you allow that?

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Can I take the next person since yours was a point of order, and then I may come back?

MARIO VELOSO: Of course.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. Microphone 6, Cecil Perry.

CECIL PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is obvious that common events cast their shadows. And the use of semantics has a way of coloring what we want to say. And I have not suspected, but somehow it feels as if there is a division between the emerging world and the developed world.

But in any language, you will find that the word “pastor” has a similar meaning from a biblical point of view. It is couched in a pastoral context of shepherding.

And the word “minister” has to do also with service, whether it be by the deacons or whatever you may want to tag to it. And I am afraid, from the information that I am getting, that there is a lot of anticipation that colors whatever discussion. We may say it has nothing to do with what is coming on Wednesday, but you understand that perception is greater than reality.

And whatever we may do, Wednesday is still in this room.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much. And please don't applaud. It will help us facilitate the agendas more neutrally.

At this moment, dear delegates, I recognize those who are already standing at the microphones. But in view of the fact that I sense there is quite a bit of repetition now, I would like to actually suggest that we entertain a motion—

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm not redundant.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. You're not redundant. Thank you. And, therefore, at the point where a delegate at the microphone will want to do that, the chair will accept it. At this point I have a point of order from Israel Leito, Inter-American Division, microphone 6.

ISRAEL LEITO: Mr. Chair, I believe we need to speak slower, because the translators are not coming through and many of the non-English-speaking people are lost because it is lost in translation.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much. I would encourage every delegate to take note of that so that everybody can benefit from this discussions we are having.

Next on the list is microphone 2, Ed Galan, North American Division.

ED GALAN: Brother Chairman, many thanks for your courtesy and your respect in these proceedings. And this is very difficult, and I recognize that, and I thank you for it, as well as your colleagues.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you.

ED GALAN: I really think that words are powerful. There's power in the way that we interpret a word. I love languages. And out of respect to all of the languages that are present, I do think—and I agree with Pastor Leito about being slow and such.

But one very crucial and important thing that I would appreciate, and that is that we do have a glossary, for instance, in many of our documents—the *Church Manual*, the *Rules of Order* that we have as delegates now. You'll have all of the acronyms and an explanation of what they mean.

I would recommend that we include, for the sake of the world church, because the meanings of words will evolve and change as language changes, as times change and such, that we include in the glossary of our documents a uniform definition of the word “minister,” a uniformly accepted definition of the word “pastor,” a uniformly accepted, denominationally accepted interpretation of these words, so that there can be clarity for those of many cultures, of many languages, and so that there could be clarity in our own hearts. Because we all want unity, and we all desire this. So a glossary with a uniformly accepted and agreed-upon definition for some of these terms would be so helpful.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. Thank you. We'll take that as advice. Thank you.

Microphone 3, Neil Nedley, General Conference.

NEIL NEDLEY: Yes. GC delegate, North American Division. Again, a layperson trying to understand this.

If we are getting rid of the word “ministers” in the *Church Manual*, which was stated this change would do, and there's no more reference to “ministers,” then if we adopt this change, we can cancel

Wednesday altogether, because that is talking about ordaining ministers, which we no longer have in the *Church Manual*.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Again, if we go to the *Church Manual* and the use of terms that we approve—I am going to read the full paragraph that we approved in 2010. It says, “*Pastor and minister*—Most areas of the world Church use ‘pastor’ to identify a member of the clergy, so the term is used in these pages rather ‘minister,’ regardless of the responsibilities assigned by the local conference. Use of the term here is not intended to mandate the usage where the custom is to use ‘minister.’ Pastors referred to in this manual are those who have been appointed by the conference to oversee the efforts of the local church or district” [pp. 20, 21].

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. Microphone 3, Ray Roennfeldt, South Pacific Division.

RAY ROENNFELDT: Brother Chair, I’m happy with the change as the *Church Manual* is amended. But I just wanted to point out that, in fact, the licenses and credentials that we give are actually called “ministerial licenses” and “ministerial credentials.” So I’m wondering whether we’re going to change the name of them as well, and they would be called “pastoral licenses” and “pastoral credentials.”

HARALD WOLLAN: Thank you, Dr. Roennfeldt. We are dealing only with the *Church Manual*, not with the *Working Policy*. And the licensure that you’re talking about is mentioned in the *Working Policy*, so I can only answer for the *Church Manual*. And we wanted to bring it into harmony with the decision that was taken in 2010.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. I will go to microphone 4, Doug Batchelor, General Conference.

DOUG BATCHELOR: Mr. Chairman and friends, in light of what’s coming Wednesday and listening to the other comments, I do believe that this is directly connected with the subject of ordination that will be addressed. Because I notice on line 9 of the recommended change it says, “To give men”—and the word “men” is struck out—and it then supplies “pastors” with “ministers.”

There's a big biblical difference between the gifts of the spirit and ordained offices.

So I would recommend against these changes, and I would support the motion that we question the initial motion and vote on it. But I recommend we send these items back to the committee that is working on the manual, at least until after our vote on Wednesday. Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: With an apology that I have to the remaining speakers, at this point the chair would like to recognize if you want to make that a motion. The chair will recognize the motion.

DOUG BATCHELOR: That was intended to be a motion.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. It was moved that the item be referred back in view of the discussions that we have had on the floor.

Is there a second?

I see a second. Thank you.

All in favor that we refer this item back, indicate by raising your yellow cards.

Thank you.

Opposed, by the same sign.

The motion carries. Thank you. The item will be referred back.

And with that, we are ready to move to the next item.

HARALD WOLLAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Number 404 deals with the question of who is allowed to speak in the church. And the issue in front of us deals with the fact that the current *Church Manual* says that in order for a person to speak, that individual needs to have a credential.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Just a moment. I think we have a point of order. Microphone 2. We don't—oh. Sorry. OK. It disappeared. All right. You may proceed. Oh. OK. You may proceed.

HARALD WOLLAN: Thank you. As the *Church Manual* is written today, it indicates that for a person to be able to speak in a local church, he or she has to have a credential. The issue that creates—

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. Let—it's now corrected. We have a point of order from microphone 4, Elizabeth Talbot, North American Division.

ELIZABETH TALBOT: Yes. I believe there is a violation of the parliamentary procedure going on already three times this morning. You said you would entertain the call to question before. And you have decided which motion you take even though there were two previous motions and there was a call to question.

So I believe there is a procedural problem going on right now with the chair.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: I'm sorry for that, and probably I missed that. And I apologize.

ELIZABETH TALBOT: Aside from apologizing, it's time that we go to the previous question that has been called. So aside from your sorriness, you should do something about it.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: We had passed that and we were on a new item, I suppose.

ELIZABETH TALBOT: No. It was a call to question that you requested to delay for more comments.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Which I did until I found that there is a repetition. And I requested that the speakers who are standing on the microphone to bear with me so that I can take the motion that was previously moved.

ELIZABETH TALBOT: Correct. And then you must take the motion before. How can you choose which—to take the last motion?

GEOFFREY MBWANA: The motion I chose came prior to the one that you're referring to—

ELIZABETH TALBOT: No, it did not.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Well, thank you. I think that's my understanding, that's how I viewed it, and that's why I proceeded the way I did.

All right. Let's proceed. I see another point of order. Jay Gallimore, microphone 2.

JAY GALLIMORE: Brother Chairman, it's complicated. I think you've been working your way through it very carefully, and I want to commend you for doing it. Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. Let's refrain from applauding, please. Let's refrain from applauding, please.

OK. I have on microphone 2—we don't have any motion on the floor. But, Larry Boggess, you want to speak, North American Division.

LARRY BOGGESS: I'd like to speak to the new item, if it's in order.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: We are not ready yet.

Please proceed.

HARALD WOLLAN: Let's try again.

The *Church Manual*, as it stands today, indicates that for a person to speak in the church, he or she should be able to present a credential. That means that every—

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. Points of order, which I would like to recognize at this time. Microphone 6, Megan Mole.

MEGAN MOLE: Brother Chairman, thank you. I would like to make an appeal regarding the points of order following the *General Conference Rules of Order 4A*.

The purpose is to object to a decision or ruling of the chair at the time it is read regarding a point of order or to relieve the chair from having to make a decision by placing responsibility on the delegates or members. So I'd like to appeal regarding the previous decision made by the chair and call a new vote.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: So what's the decision of the chair that you are appealing on?

MEGAN MOLE: The decision to wait to move the point we're discussing back until further comments have been made.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: I really don't understand it as yet.

MEGAN MOLE: Oh. To—what? Never mind. Sorry, sir.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: I'm sorry.

OK, point of order, microphone 4, Mario Veloso, General Conference.

MARIO VELOSO: Thank you, Brother Chairman.

My point of order is that I reserved the possibility of making a motion at that moment. But since you accepted a later motion, I want to support your ruling on that point. And in this way, I would open—I think the observation that was coming from this lady was to this point. But I would, to facilitate, not request the privilege of having the motion to be made, since it is already an accepted one. I want to support this one, and the chair, which, to me, is doing a good job.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: And the chair honored the commitment that it made to you at that point. Thank you.

We have several other points of order. We have at microphone 6 Pedro Pozos, North American Division.

PEDRO POZOS: Thank you.

What I would like to say is that I appreciate your interest in listening to our people before calling for a motion. But is there anybody keeping record of any questions of motions so it can be voted on as it is, as it was explained? Because while different people speak, that will change the perception.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much. A recording is going on. And as the matter is referred back, reference will be made to the notes that are being taken. Thank you.

Microphone 2, we have Elouise Kaanaana, North American Division.

ELOUISE KAANAANA: I would beg your patience with me. I have studied parliamentary procedure, and I am really concerned about the way that matters have been handled. And I respect the fact that you are the chair, but I ask for your indulgence.

Motions have been made were overlooked, and then you went forward with a motion, I suppose, that you preferred. And I would just beg that you be fair and honest in the way you proceed from now on.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. I will try to do so. I just thought I gave priority as the motions came. That's how I acted. I respect every motion that is made, and I apologize if I missed any parliamentary procedures. Thank you.

We have another point of order, and I just hope we can get past that as well. Microphone 4, James Standish, South Pacific Division. Please.

JAMES STANDISH: Good morning, friends. We had a motion. That motion has to be voted on before we vote on other motions. We violated that principle. We need to go back, revote, and if that vote fails, then consider the second motion.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: I am seeking counsel since this keeps on coming back. The chair believes that he proceeded in the right manner, because probably the effect would be the same, that the matter would not be debated upon, and inasmuch as this is going back and will be coming back to us again, may I kindly plead with the house to allow us to proceed, and then we will have a time to air our concerns when we revisit the matter, if you don't mind. Thank you for your understanding.

All right. Point of Order, Louis Torres, North American Division, microphone 2.

LOUIS TORRES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Would it be helpful in the process if, when we are standing here and desire to make a motion, we could make a motion with the condition that other people could speak, and after you hear everybody's speech, you can come back to that motion?

Because the problem that has happened is that people wanted to make a motion, you asked them not to make a motion, and then somebody threw a question, which is confusing. So is it possible, then, that when we stand up, if we desire to make a motion, that we would make a motion with the consideration that other people can speak and then come back to that motion? Would that be helpful?

GEOFFREY MBWANA: The chair was trying to be considerate in allowing people who are standing at the microphone to also be given an opportunity. Once you recognize a motion, you will have

to speak to that motion, which may deny them an opportunity to speak to the main motion at that particular time. So the chair was just trying to be giving some time to others to air their views before recognizing the motion.

But as we move forward, we will consult to see what would be the best way to proceed given the experience we've had right now. Thank you.

All right. We have another point of order. It will be a morning of point of orders. Pardon me. We have on microphone 6, Boyce Mkhize from the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

BOYCE MKHIZE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I'm speaking on the issue of the plethora of point of orders that are being raised. I think we're suffering from delayed reaction or posttraumatic something. Because the situation is that, as far as I'm aware, you raised a point of order before a vote was entertained. The matter was voted. There was no point of order raised to stop or to halt the vote. Therefore, because the house proceeded to take a vote that was duly recognized by the chair, to raise point of orders, a string of them that have been raised up to so far, which is actually abuse of process. And my appeal is that you rule every point of order in relation to the motion that has been voted out of order.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much. And with that, we will proceed then with the agenda.

HARALD WOLLAN: Thank you. We'll try again.

The *Church Manual* says that a person needs a credential to be able to speak in the local church. The fact is that we do not have a system where all of the elders who normally speak on Sabbaths do not have credentials issued by the conference. And we would make sure that it is, according to the *Church Manual*, permitted for a local elder or a person who is respected to be able to speak in the church according to the following.

And I read from line 24, “No one should be allowed to speak to any congregation unless he/she has been invited by the church in harmony with guidelines given by the conference.”

And then I read, “It is recognized, however, that there are times when congregations may be addressed by government officials or civil leaders; but all unauthorized persons shall not be given access to the pulpit.”

I’d like to move this.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Before you do that, there is a point of order, microphone 5, Lauro Gonzalez-Arellano, Inter-American Division.

Do we have someone who can assist us with translation?

If you need translation as you walk to the microphone, help the chair to find somebody who can translate for you. It will save us time.

LAURO GONZALEZ-ARELLANO [translated]: I’m concerned about the situation we have happening now. It looks like delegates who have come here have come with some kind of prejudice.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: I’m sorry. But the chair rules that that’s not a point of order.

LAURO GONZALEZ-ARELLANO [translated]: And my point of order is that, given the situation, I will ask that we have a word of prayer so the Holy Spirit might be among us. Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. At the appropriate time we will do that.

OK. We have another point of order. Microphone 5, Eliadis Fermin, Inter-American Division.

ELIADIS FERMIN: It’s OK.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. Thank you.

OK. There was a motion that was made on this item. Is there a second?

Seconded. Thank you.

OK. On this item we already have people on the microphone. And at this time I recognize microphone 2, Larry Boggess, North American Division. Sorry. You've been standing for a long time there.

LARRY BOGGESS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that some rewording would be helpful on this subject. I see that we have put most of the responsibility on the local conference, local field. I can tell you from experience that it's wonderful to have my big brother helping me to protect the pulpit. Whether they have credentials or not, I think it's important that we not leave it open for people who are invited.

I had a situation where somebody was invited that did not have credentials, did not know anything about it. And so I think that we need to have some pretty strong language, knowing the times in which we live and knowing of how many people would like to be in our pulpits. And so I'm not sure, Mr. Chairman, how we would reword it. But I don't like the word "invited," and I don't like that it's left up to the local conference to decide.

I see a trend here away from the combination of governance with the General Conference or the union and the local conference, which I don't think is really the direction that we ought to be going.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: And, dear delegates, I wanted to give some leeway so that members who are standing on the microphone can make their points before a motion, before I entertained a motion to refer back. I will now follow the procedures exactly as they are.

So if you are on a microphone and you make a motion to refer the item back, I will take it at that time. I just wanted to make that clarification as we move on. Thank you.

Microphone 4, Eugen Hartwich.

EUGEN HARTWICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand the good intention of this change, but it will bring some problems that I would like to describe.

In my last district there was a church board that wanted to invite pastors from other denominations to preach regularly on Sabbath in the church. And I opposed it, so there was a tension. And we referred it to the conference, and the conference said that, because of the *Church Manual*, it's not possible to invite pastors from other denominations to speak and preach regularly on Sabbath to the congregation. So if we change this wording right now, you give the conferences the possibility to create different guidelines. And this will bring confusion to the world church. So my appeal to the congregation here is to let it as it is. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ORLEY ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As delegates, I don't think we're here to attack the chair. And, of course, I think attacking it is rude and unnecessary, and we should try to refrain from that kind of behavior, because that is not Christian.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: The chair appreciates the point, but I also request that we speak to the motion. Thank you.

Microphone 6, Onalenna Balapi, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

ONALENNA BALAPI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regard to the suggested change, particularly on the speakers that must speak in our churches, the idea doesn't sound clear to me, Mr. Chair, because we have several segments of times when we address the church.

For example, you have the Sabbath school program, lesson study, the main service, and in some cases Bible study in the afternoon. Now, when you say someone has to be authorized, at what segment of the day should this person be authorized?

I plead that the *Church Manual* Committee make this thing as clear as possible. Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: We will proceed to microphone 5, Jiwan Moon, General Conference.

JIWAN MOON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to believe that all the churches are under the pastoral leadership that is being overseen by the conference—that the local churches are operating under the guidelines that are provided by the local conference.

During the General Conference session, for Sabbath worship I heard powerful preaching from a young girl. I believe she doesn't have a credential or license, but it was most gracious that that young child was given a chance to speak to the congregation. So I'm speaking in support of the motion that the local churches be given an opportunity for them to invite—of course, in consultation with the conference. Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much. And with that we are now ready to vote. Please take your yellow card.

All in favor to approve the motion as presented, please raise your yellow card.

Opposed by the same sign.

Thank you. It is carried.

We can move to the next item.

HARALD WOLLAN: Mr. Chairman, number 405. It deals with reasons for discipline. And in order to deal with the realities that we face and to have actually written backing for decisions taken in the church, we are suggesting rewording, restructuring, of the various points mentioned for reasons for discipline.

And you will see that there are some some cross-outs in number 4, but please understand that what is crossed out in number 4 is actually covered in number 3.

So number 3 reads, as we suggest, "Violation of the commandment of the law of God, which reads, 'You shall not commit adultery' "—and we refer to Exodus and to Matthew—"as it relates to the marriage institution and the Christian home, biblical standards of moral conduct, and any act of sexual intimacy outside of a marriage relationship and/or nonconsensual acts of sexual conduct within a marriage, whether those acts are legal or illegal. Such acts includes but are not limited to child sexual abuse, including abuse of the vulnerable. Marriage is defined as a public, lawfully binding, monogamous, heterosexual relationship between one man and one woman."

Then we suggest the following: “The production, use, or distribution of pornography, and any other sexual perversions.”

The next change is concerning: “Adherence to or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organization.”

And I’d like to move these changes.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: It has been moved.

Do we have a second?

Thank you.

All right. If you would like to speak to this motion, you can move to the microphone with your badge, swipe at the station, and your name will appear here.

We already have on microphone 3, Jeroen Tuinstra from the Inter-European Division.

JEROEN TUINSTRA: Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak on behalf of the many members and young adults who are faithful, tithe-paying, churchgoing Adventists but who live together, and I would like to speak on behalf of many of the children or sons and daughters of many of the delegates here who live together.

I’m not diminishing the value of marriage. However, I don’t want to diminish the quality of the relationship that many members or young adults who live together, often as a stepstone to marriage and often more healthy relationships than are marriages.

I don’t want to sanctify living together, but I also don’t want to vilify living together.

I am single, I don’t have children, I don’t live together, so I’m not speaking for myself. I’m speaking on behalf of the others that might be represented here or not.

And so I would like to make an amendment to the motion that the line reading from line 19 would go as follows: And I’m starting halfway to center, “Biblical standards.”

“Biblical standards of moral conduct, and any nonconsensual act of sexual conduct within or without a marriage, whether those acts are legal or illegal.” I would like to make this amendment to the motion.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. A delegate has a right to make a motion to amend a section. Would you like to read that again once more?

JEROEN TUINSTRA: Should I read the whole sentence?

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Yes. The amendment you are making.

JEROEN TUINSTRA: OK. Reading from sentence 17: “Violation of the commandment of the law of God which reads ‘You shall not commit adultery’ as it relates to the marriage institution and the Christian home, biblical standards of moral conduct, and any nonconsensual act of sexual conduct within or without a marriage, whether those acts are legal or illegal.”

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. A motion to amend as read has been presented. Is there a second? There’s a second back there. Thank you.

If you want to speak to the amendment, this is the time. And I don’t know whether those who are speaking on the microphone now are on the—

If you want to speak to the amendment now, you can state that.

ÁNGEL RODRÍGUEZ: I want to speak to the amendment.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. Ángel Rodríguez— Oh. There is a point of order. Microphone 6, Goodwell Nthani, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

GOODWELL NTHANI: Mr. Chair, my clarification or point of order has to do with whether we are making amendments on the floor now, or whether they need to be referred back to the committee.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: He has a right to do that, in view of even the explanations that we have given.

OK. We have another point of order. Boyce Mkhize, microphone 6.

BOYCE MKHIZE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is a motion that is diametrically opposed and fundamentally vitiates our fundamental beliefs and doctrines as a church competent to stand? Because if your ruling is that such an amendment would violate that which is biblically authorized or sanctified, that motion shouldn't be entertained. And I would like to submit, in fact, that if a motion were to be approved here to say let's change the day of worship, that motion would not be capable of standing. And therefore entertainment of a motion of this nature, that amendment in particular, would vitiate that which we stand for, as we understand it, in terms of scripture.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. I think—

BOYCE MKHIZE: And I submit that it is not capable of standing.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Given the parliamentary rules that we voted, every delegate has a right to that. The point you are making is not provided for in the parliamentary rules that we voted.

OK. We can now move on to the amendment.

I have on the list now Ángel Rodríguez, General Conference, microphone 5.

ÁNGEL RODRÍGUEZ: Brother Chairman, the motion goes against Fundamental Belief 23, which defines what marriage is. Living together is considered today to be a redefinition of marriage. We have, based on the Bible, defined marriage as: "Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in a loving relationship."

This opens the door for what traditional biblical and even Jewish morality sustains to be correct. So I am not even sure that the motion should be entertained.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. OK.

Next on the line, we have Jay Gallimore, North American Division, microphone 2.

JAY GALLIMORE: Brother Chairman, I'd like to second what Dr. Rodríguez just said. This should be voted down overwhelmingly and quickly. We're not really going down this road. And if the chair would like to entertain it, I move the previous question.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: The chair will recognize that. Is there a second?

OK. On the amendment, OK, all in favor of the amendment, please indicate by raising your yellow card.

OK. And opposed by the same sign.

The amendment . . .

OK. I need to make—I'm being corrected here. Sorry. The vote that we are to take is to cease debate on the amendment. OK, not the amendment.

With that correction, all in favor that we cease debate on the amendment, please show it by raising your card. Thank you.

Opposed by the same sign.

Thank you. [Voted.]

And now to the amendment.

OK. There is a point of order. Julie Keymar, microphone 2.

JULIE KEYMAR: Mr. Chairman, I have a request. If someone asks for an amendment to be made, in respect for our brothers and sisters who don't speak English and for all of us, I think that amendment needs to be put in writing so we can all read it on the screen. Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much. Good point of order. And we will try to do that.

Now we are voting on the amendment. All in favor of the amendment, please indicate by raising your card, yellow card. Thank you.

Opposed by the same sign.

Thank you. The amendment loses.

And we are back to the main motion. We'll now recognize Lante Thompson from the West-Central Africa Division, microphone 1.

LANTE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do appreciate the effort of the committee to somehow summarize the issues here. But since this testimony will be used in local churches where people will want to argue the issues, I will humbly request that these specific words that have been omitted should be brought back as part of the *Church Manual*, indicating fornication, promiscuity, incest, homosexual perversions. Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much. Microphone 6, Emmanuel Mwale, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

EMMANUEL MWALE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to say that the statement as it stands is very good because it includes a number of things that we are finding difficult with explaining to members. But I wanted also a clarification on the part which talks about nonconsensual acts of sexual conduct within a marriage. Does this refer to spousal rape?

HARALD WOLLAN: I didn't get the last two words. Spousal—yes.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. We go to microphone 4, John Bradshaw, General Conference.

JOHN BRADSHAW: Mr. Chairman, I think it's very important that we recognize we are living in a rapidly changing world, and the moral tone and commonly accepted moral practices are shifting beneath our feet like sand.

I think it's very important that our church recognizes that, and I am encouraged that my church has recognized that by writing a statement that is at once very comprehensive and very biblical and something for which I am grateful. So I would just like to commend those who have submitted this to us for our consideration and express my very strong support for this statement.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you very much.

Luis Jerez, South American Division, microphone 6.

LUIS JEREZ [translated]: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In points 3 and 4 the changes have been mentioned. I consider that number 3 is a very good point. But in point 4 we are excluding more detail, explanation. We need to deal with these kinds of problems in the churches that is being left out. I suggest that we keep the words “fornication, promiscuity, incest, homosexual practices.” Thank you.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. Microphone 2, Daniel Jackson, North American Division.

DANIEL JACKSON: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I affirm this statement 3. And I concur with what Elder Bradshaw said when he said the moral sands are shifting beneath us. Hence, I have a recommendation. And I don't know how this should be handled, whether now or just as a consideration.

But when we read the last sentence on lines 22 and 23, “Marriage is defined as a public, lawfully binding, monogamous heterosexual relationship,” etc., I think at some point we are going to have to review this sentence. Because even though it is identified on line 23 as heterosexual, etc., in the United States and Canada, now there are lawfully binding marriages that are not heterosexual. So I would think some consideration at some point needs to be given to a redefinition of marriage to make sure that we work around what is lawful and what isn't and keep it in harmony with the Word of God and with what the church has taught. So that would be my statement. I don't know how you want to handle it. But I don't think we should lose sight of this wording. The “lawfully binding” idea has changed in the last several years. So I just leave it at that.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Would you like to make a recommendation to refer it back?

DANIEL JACKSON: I certainly would be happy to do that, if that's in order.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: It would be in order.

DANIEL JACKSON: OK. I would like to move that the *Church Manual* Committee consider, in the coming quinquennium, the—

GEOFFREY MBWANA: I thought you were referring it back to the standing committee.

DANIEL JACKSON: Well, if the committee is still standing.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Yes. We have the standing committee.

DANIEL JACKSON: All right. I would like to make a motion to refer to the standing committee a consideration of the wording of the sentence on lines 22 and 23, with specific attention being made to the terminology “lawfully binding” so that they could tighten that up and—

Anyway, that is my motion.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: OK. It’s been moved, and I see a second.

OK. The motion is to refer back.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Brother Chairman, can we just clarify this before you accept the motion?

In line 23 it says—and Elder Jackson is right, how it’s changing, the law.

But there is something really clear here in line 23. The last section says “between one man and one woman.” It seems to me that it’s covered, because in some countries same-sex marriage is legal. We are defining here that it’s only between one man and one woman. It seems to me it’s very clear.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Elder Jackson, would that cover your concern?

DANIEL JACKSON: I certainly do believe in the health message, and I’m getting my steps in today.

Mr. Chairman, I recognize that on line 23 it does cover it. My concern is whether there is better terminology than “lawfully binding.” My concern is that at some point in the future there may be a question about what is lawfully binding, even though it’s been spelled out. I agree. And I was only asking for a reconsideration of that terminology.

I guess the question for me is Is there a better terminology than “lawfully binding” that would tighten this up and not leave any potential loopholes?

Because I believe in my heart we need to make sure that we are on the firm foundation of the Word of God, and that there is no openness—and I'm not accusing anybody; I don't see this as liberal.

But can we find a better terminology?

But I'm not going to die if this motion doesn't pass.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you.

DANIEL JACKSON: Or anything like that.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: All right. We have people who want to speak to the motion. Mario Veloso, General Conference, microphone 4.

MARIO VELOSO: Thank you, Brother Chairman.

I would like to support Elder Jackson. He's right on seeing a danger here, because, as you read it, it is true that later on it is clearly said between one man and one woman. But the sentence "lawfully binding" stands by itself. If somebody would take us to court, this will play against us. So he's right. The committee should look at it again.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. The next person, microphone 4, Stoy Proctor, General Conference.

STOY PROCTOR: Mario made my point. I think we ought to consider taking the word "lawfully" out.

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you. All right. On the motion to refer this back, we would like to take a vote on that. If you're in favor of referring this back because of the concerns here stipulated, please indicate your favor by raising your card.

Thank you.

Opposed by the same sign. Thank you.

And the item will be referred back.

OK. We have five minutes to the end of our session. And I take counsel from one of the delegates that we spend some time in prayer. Before the individual who will do the final prayer, James Hasu, brings a prayer to us. Let's spend some moment together again in groups of two where you are. Let's call upon the Lord to continue to be with us as we transact the different businesses of the church here during this session, that we will again be guided by the Holy Spirit. And then when we finish praying in twos. James Hasu will close with a prayer.

[Prayer by James Hasu.]

GEOFFREY MBWANA: Thank you, delegates. We would like to remind to you bring your electronic voting gadgets this afternoon. There will be another testing of the system.

With that, bon appetit.

[End of morning session.]