

SIXTH BUSINESS MEETING

Sixtieth General Conference session, July 5, 2015, 2:00 p.m.

JERRY PAGE: Welcome to our afternoon business session. We hope you had a good lunch. We're asking the Lord to lead us this afternoon. I want to just introduce the participants on the platform before we go into a short prayer time.

On the platform on my left, your right, is Wendy Trim. She's the recording secretary. Next to her is Alexander Bryant, secretary of the North American Division. We have next to him Artur Stele, who is a general vice president and also director of Biblical Research Institute. Next to him is Todd McFarland from our Office of General Counsel. And then Cathy Payne, who works with our Ministerial Resource Center and the Ministerial Association, will be coming. She'll be coming to lead us into a short time of prayer before we have music by our Samoan Gospel Heralds. So we're praying that God will give us a good experience this afternoon together as we work through His church's business.

CATHY PAYNE: Good afternoon. Before we start this afternoon's session, I would like to invite each of you to gather in groups of two or three and just have a word of prayer inviting Jesus and the Holy Spirit to come into these meetings, that all that we decide will glorify Him. So let's just take a few minutes right now and break into small groups. Thank you.

[Prayer.]

Our dear Heavenly Father, we just want to thank You, Lord, that we are able to work for this wonderful church, the opportunities that You have allowed us to gather together to go and vote and decide the future of our church.

Father, we ask that You will send Thy Holy Spirit into this building and to each of our hearts and that all of the decisions that are made are those that will only glorify You and help to bring Your second coming much sooner.

We thank You, Lord, for all that You've done for this church. And we ask, Lord, that You will open up doors and windows that have never been opened before, that we will be able to enter areas of this

world that know nothing of You and be able to spread Your Word. Now, please, come to this meeting this afternoon and fill us with Your love, understanding, and peace. And we just thank You, Lord, again for the opportunity to serve You in this special way. Amen.

[Song.]

ARTUR STELE: Thank you for the wonderful music. I hope you had a good lunch. Do you like the food at the session or not? There is silence.

Well, it looks like you ate well and you are sleeping.

Well, let me give you a little overview of how we hope the afternoon session will go.

We will start, for a change, with a different item of our agenda. We will hear a short report about the handbook for deacons and deaconesses. And after that, we will return to the *Church Manual* agenda. Then we hope to have a report from the Nominating Committee. After the report, we will deal with some issues of voting and then return back to the *Church Manual* agenda and see how far we will come.

And so now we invite Jonas Arrais and Jerry Page, Ministerial secretary, to present the handbooks of deacons and deaconesses.

JERRY PAGE: Acts 6 says this. I love this report. In those days, when the numbers of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring—they had a little trouble in the early church, didn't they?—of the Grecians against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. “Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

“And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost” [verses 2-5]—and then it goes on naming others. They set them before the apostles, and “the word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied” [verse 7]. “And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people” [verse 8].

I like that description of a deacon, don't you? Someone who's full of faith and the Holy Ghost, someone who does great wonders and miracles. Ellen White says in *The Acts of the Apostles* that the early believers did some mighty things, but we, every member of the church today, should do the same kinds of things they were doing.

Stephen preached so powerfully as a deacon that he got himself killed as a martyr. So we have wonderful deacons and deaconesses in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, about 700,000 of them, although that's only an estimate. And we love the work they do. We'd like to see them fully empowered by the Holy Spirit in every way. And so Ministerial was given the responsibility of training and equipping, getting resources for deacons and deaconesses, about two years ago, in Annual Council, 2013.

So we've given that responsibility in Ministerial to Jonas Arrais, who is a wonderful worker for God. He's the *Elder's Digest* editor and also an associate secretary of the Ministerial Association.

Jonas, come tell us a little about what we've done as a team.

JONAS ARRAIS: As you may know, in 2013 the GC Annual Council took the vote to put the deacons and deaconesses under the care of the Ministerial Association.

ARTUR STELE: I'm sorry; I need to interrupt. There is a point of order concerning the translation.

Microphone 6, Israel Leito.

ISRAEL LEITO: Yes, elder. Good afternoon, and thank you. My delegation has reported to me that the Spanish translation is not coming through.

ARTUR STELE: All right. Let us pause for a minute. We need to make sure that the Spanish translation will be back. Please let us know as soon as you get the signal.

You got the translation back? Yes, I see a sign, it's OK. Thank you.

Please continue. Sorry for interrupting.

JONAS ARRAIS: OK. Let's try again.

Since 2013 the Ministerial Association has been involved in preparing resources to help our pastors and our leaders, elders, in order to train the deacons and deaconesses in our local church, where

we create a kind of Web site to provide some of those resources. You can see on the screen the eldersdigest.org. If you go there, you can download many seminar presentations, PowerPoints, and so forth.

But the latest resource that we have prepared is the new, first-ever *Deacon's and Deaconess's Handbook* in church history. This material is available in our Web site in the ABCs. Right now we have only an English version, but we will be providing to the divisions the opportunity to make the translations.

But in partnership with Safeliz, we have prepared a kind of Bible for deacons and deaconesses. In this Bible you can find this handbook inside, in English, in Spanish, and in French. You can find this resource also in the ABCs and in the Safeliz booth. You can also find many other resources to equip pastors or elders there.

We thank you for your support. We are open for suggestions for input to help us to provide more resource for our pastors and elders in order to train these wonderful people, about 700,000 deacons and deaconesses around the world, 250,000 local leaders, elders, and company directors, while we have less than 30,000 pastors to take care of so many congregations, about 150,000.

Thank you for your time.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. Are you appreciating the work they have done in producing this handbook?

[Applause.]

Thank you.

Now, I'm getting signs that the translation is still not working? Is the Spanish translation working? It seems to be. Yes. OK.

Let's ask the same question, but in Spanish.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: [Speaking Spanish.]

There are some people who are not receiving translations.

[Speaking Spanish.]

OK. The majority of them are receiving the translation.

ARTUR STELE: OK. Please, those who are responsible, if you could fix the problem. Most of the people are getting the signal, but it looks like not all.

Before we go to the *Church Manual* and before we invite the chair of the *Church Manual* Committee and the secretary, let us see if we live in the same calendar.

Today is Sunday, July 5. Is it the same in your calendar? Let us remember that Jesus said, “Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow”—I mean, Wednesday—“because Wednesday will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

So let us remember that today is Sunday, so we turn now to our head of the *Church Manual* Committee, and let’s continue.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The first item this afternoon is going to be item 406. And it’s just to recommend a change of just one word. The recommendation of this section of the *Church Manual* has to do with discipline. There are two forms of discipline in the church: censure; and removing the name of a member of the church from the book of the church.

And on line 11 there is just a change of word. It says, “No church should vote to discipline” instead of “remove.” The right word is “discipline,” because “remove” is one of the ways to apply discipline.

So the statement would be: “No church should vote to discipline a member under circumstances that deprive the member of these rights.” It’s referring to the right to be notified of the time when the member will be subject to the discipline of the recommendation of the church board to the church.

And then it says, “Written notice must be given at least two weeks before the meeting and include the reasons for the disciplinary hearing.”

So I move, Mr. Chairman, that we just change the word “remove” to “discipline.”

ARTUR STELE: OK. It is moved. Is there a second?

I see a second.

Are there any observations?

I see no one. Are you ready to vote? Ready?

All in favor, please raise your cards.

Thank you.

Opposed, the same sign.

OK. It is carried.

Next one.

HARALD WOLLAN: Mr. Chairman, the next three items deal with the same issue, regarding when members decide that they want to withdraw their membership. In order to safeguard an individual's right, we are dealing with this in three separate pages in the document.

Item 407 outlines the procedure that is necessary to be followed for removing names, because we, as a church, have no right to maintain a person on our records if that person wants his or her name removed.

So if the chair allows, I would like to move the three next pages, but I will explain them and read them.

Item 407 reads, from line 19, "The church recognizes the right of the individual to withdraw membership. Letters of resignation should be presented to the board, where the resignation will be recorded with the effective date according to the resignation letter. Efforts should be made to restore the individual to the church family."

Then following on, item 408 describes it, starting from line 13: "When a member requests in writing to be removed from church membership, the church board must act on the request. Efforts should be made to restore the individual to the church family."

The same issue is dealt with in item 409, but in a slightly different way. And I think we need to read the whole sentence, starting from line 9: "The clerk has no authority to add names to or remove names from the membership record without a vote of the church, which must always vote to add or remove a name, except in the case of the death of a member, or when a member requests in writing to be removed from membership."

Then from line 15: “When a member submits a written request to the church board to be removed from membership, the clerk will record the action of the board.”

I’d like to move these three items.

ARTUR STELE: Is there a second? It is seconded. I see some people at the mikes. Microphone 2, Ronald Rasmussen, please.

RONALD RASMUSSEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 98, line 20, the word “should” can be interpreted as being optional. The rest of the language on pages 99 and 100 dealing with this makes it imperative that once a letter is submitted, the church board must act on the request, and the clerk will record the action.

I would suggest—and I need your clarification, Mr. Chairman, whether it would be more expedient that this be a motion to amend or to refer. But I would like to have the word “should” removed and “shall” inserted on line 20.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Mr. Chairman, he is right. We need to change that to “shall be moved.”

ARTUR STELE: Let me see if the body agrees by common consent. This is really a grammatical issue. Will you be comfortable if you do it?

Those who are comfortable, if you could show it.

Thank you. Thank you very much.

Those who are against.

It is taken care of.

RONALD RASMUSSEN: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR STELE: OK. Microphone 2, Larry Boggess.

LARRY BOGGESS: Larry Boggess, North American Division.

I’d like to ask why the phrase “out of Christian consideration”—

ARMANDO MIRANDA: What page?

LARRY BOGGESS: Page 98, line 16.

Why was that left out of the new?

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Your explanation?

HARALD WOLLAN: I don't think we discussed why it was removed. But if it softens the word, I think there's no problem. There's no contradiction with that. What we are dealing with actually is the individual's right. And if you want to add "out of Christian consideration," I don't see a problem, because it's not a big change.

LARRY BOGGESS: I understand that, Mr. Secretary. I appreciate the way it's rewritten.

I would move that we include that sentence in the new document.

ARTUR STELE: All right. You would like to have it as a—

ARMANDO MIRANDA: We can just—by common consensus.

ARTUR STELE: All right.

HARALD WOLLAN: I think the speaker actually addresses an issue that is important, because he wants us to avoid for public discussion on the issue, and that is a very significant issue. But that does not take away the responsibility from the church to do anything in its power to try to win the person back.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. Then I accept the motion.

Is there a second to the motion? Yes, there is.

Are there any remarks, observations, in regard to the motion? There are many.

So on mike 6?

SAMUEL DAVIS: Yes, Mr. Chair. Speaking to the motion, I have the same point. I think that in removing that phrase, we're removing a fundamental issue of privacy. We need to respect the individuals. And I believe that there are many church boards around the world who would be rubbing their hands in glee at the fact that that particular phrase has been removed. So I'm in favor that it be reinstated.

ARTUR STELE: All right. Now we go to Barry Oliver, microphone 4.

BARRY OLIVER: Thank you, Brother Chairman. Just affirming that the wording here is that the motion is to be amended. Is that correct, Mr. Chairman?

ARTUR STELE: Yes.

BARRY OLIVER: Thank you very much.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. There seems to be no one at the mike speaking to the amendment.

Are you ready to vote on the amendment?

Are you clear about what we are voting?

All right.

MICHAEL HAMILTON: Mr. Chairman?

ARTUR STELE: Yes.

MICHAEL HAMILTON: Yes. Just for clarification. With regard to the authority of the board and the authority of the church, is the intent of this amendment to suggest that the board would have the final authority in the event of a request for the removal of membership by the member?

ARMANDO MIRANDA: If you go to the next page—number 3 is page 100. On line 11 of item 409, talking about the clerk having no authority to add names or remove names, it says, “Except, in the case of the death of a member, or when a member requests in writing to be removed from the membership.”

In this case the suggestion is that it’s final. If we consider that we need to take this to the church in a business session to be discussed, we consider it not a problem, because we’re going to expose the person who is requesting in writing to be removed, something that generally the people who are requesting to be removed are not required to be exposed to the public scrutiny.

MICHAEL HAMILTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: So the idea is that it is final with the church board.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. There is another speaker to the motion, microphone 2, Bhaju Ram Shrestha.

BHAJU RAM SHRESTHA: What about members who leave our church but don’t request to be removed? Can we remove the member even if they don’t request it, knowing that they have left our church?

ARTUR STELE: Thank you.

HARALD WOLLAN: That is not the issue we are discussing. But to answer your question, we have no right to just remove the name. Proper procedure is written in the *Church Manual* on how to deal with missing members.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. There is a point of order, microphone 6, Victor Pilmoor.

VICTOR PILMOOR: Mr. Chairman, this morning we agreed that any amendment would appear to the screen typed out, and it seems like we're not doing that now.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. Let us really try hard to put it on the screen. OK. We will try to do it. The Secretariat is working on the amendment now.

While we are waiting, there is a speaker who wants to speak to the amendment on microphone 2, Ronald Oliver.

RONALD OLIVER: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to speak against the amendment. It would seem to me that it would cause confusion, because the intent of the entire motion is that if somebody requests that their name be removed, there would be no discussion at all—their request would simply be honored. And now we're saying that there should be no public consideration, which seems to be a conflict, and I think would cause confusion.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you.

HARALD WOLLAN: Mr. Chairman?

ARTUR STELE: Yes, please.

HARALD WOLLAN: I don't think there is any conflict here. The issue will be dealt with in the church board. In the church board you have the elders and deacons who are responsible for the visitation program of the church. And in the visitation program, in the retention program, of the church, it is necessary for the visitation. But what they're dealing with is the individual's right to determine whether he or she wants to be a member of the church. And we, as a church, have no legal right to maintain the membership of a member who does not want to be a member.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. There seems to be no one speaking to the amendment. Can we put the amendment on the screen before we vote so that people really know what they are voting about?

Thank you very much.

I see at microphone 3 someone trying to speak to the amendment. Jerilyn Burtch.

JERILYN BURTCH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It looks like we have an inconsistency on page 98. It just says that the member's letter of resignation will simply be recorded, and on page 100 it says the clerk will record the action of the board. So would the board need to take an action or not?

HARALD WOLLAN: When an individual resigns, it is the date of the letter of the resignation that has to be on the response. The reason it is written like this is simply because the same day as the letter is received, it's not necessarily possible for the church to meet as a church board. So the church board will record the date of which the resignation letter was received.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. There is another speaker to the amendment, microphone 3, Raymond Hartwell.

RAYMOND HARTWELL: Mr. Chairman, this is a friendly comment in regard to this. In addition to what she pointed out, I'm noticing on page 99 a little bit of an inconsistency. And perhaps that could be smoothed out either here or back in committee.

On lines 12 and 13 of page 99: "The clerk has no authority to remove names from or add names to the membership record, except by vote of the church." And I think the intention is to take a letter of resignation, and I agree with that. But we should carefully consider the wording here, because a clerk cannot add a name or remove it unless there is a vote by the church.

So, Mr. Chairman, I suggest that we make the wording consistent here. Thank you.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. There is another speaker at microphone 3, Rabson Nkoko.

RABSON NKOKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. While I recognize the right of an individual to withdraw his or her membership and making the discussion limited to the church board, how will the church know that a member has been removed? It will be good to indicate in the provision how the church will know when the individual has been removed.

HARALD WOLLAN: Mr. Chairman, if I may briefly reply.

ARTUR STELE: Yes, please.

HARALD WOLLAN: The intention is that we do not have a public debate on the issue. The church has full right to know when a member is withdrawing his or her membership. So for the sake of caring for the member who doesn't want to retain membership, the church needs to know, but it's no public debate.

And when we are talking about the church clerk not being able to remove a person from membership, it is actually in item 408, as it's referred to here. Lines 12 and 13: "The clerk has no authority to remove names from or add names to the membership record except by vote of the church."

Then we need to include the next sentence, and probably by just saying, "However, when a member requests," and so on. I think then it is covered.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. We have another speaker to the amendment on microphone 6, Enock Chifamba.

ENOCK CHIFAMBA: Mr. Chairman, won't this amendment make the board the final authority on removal of members? If we go to page 98, the canceled section reads "Letters of resignation should be presented to the board, which will forward them to a business meeting. Out of Christian consideration for the individual involved, action shall be taken without public discussion."

If that is included, then the church is aware, and the person is not embarrassed, because there's no public discussion. Thank you.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Brother Chairman?

ARTUR STELE: Yes, please.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: If I may. We received from one of the divisions the request to change this because of the right of the individual to request to be withdrawn from the church, and we consider that need to be protected. Even if you don't discuss it in public, it's going to be something that will arise, the question mark.

And there are other ways to inform the church and not to have a business meeting of the church, just to take the letter of resignation of this member and finally approve it without any discussion.

If you brought this letter of resignation to the business meeting, you would expose the person. And perhaps some people would just inquire, “Why this person is resigning?” We need to request the right of the people not to be discussed in public.

So we are bringing this recommendation because of the request of one of the divisions.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. And now we have the amendment on the screen, and I will ask our secretary to read it.

HARALD WOLLAN: Mr. Chairman, just to correct what is on the screen—

ARTUR STELE: It’s not the correct one. He will read it.

HARALD WOLLAN: OK.

ALEXANDER BRYANT: Page 98: “Removing Members at Their Request—Great care should be exercised in dealing with members who request to be removed from membership.” And we skip down to line 16. “Out of Christian consideration for the individuals involved, actions shall be taken without public discussion. The church recognizes the right of the individual to withdraw membership. Letters of resignation should be presented to the board, where the resignation will be recorded with the effective date according to the resignation letter. Efforts should be made to restore the individual to the church family.”

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. And we have a speaker to the amendment on microphone 6, Delight Ngwira.

DELIGHT NGWIRA: Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR STELE: Yes.

DELIGHT NGWIRA: I’m still not comfortable with a resignation letter not being brought forward to the church at large. We are working in a community where a member joins a church that has several members who are also interested in that member’s life.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. You are speaking to the main motion. Let us finish with our amendment, and then we can address the main motion.

Are you ready to vote on the amendment?

Those who are in favor of, please raise your cards for the amendment. Thank you.

Those opposed, also raise your cards.

Thank you. It is carried.

Now we are back to the main motion. And we have a number of speakers to the main motion.

We have a point of order. Ronald Nalin, microphone 4.

RONALD NALIN: Sorry, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I was a little late, but I wasn't clear about the amendment. Because on the screen, it looked like the amendment included lines 15 to 17, so the sentence "Letters of resignation should be presented to the board, which will forward them to a business meeting" was also part of the amendment. But when we read the amendment, we started reading from line 16. So I just wanted to know if we have just voted to restore also lines 15 and 16. Thank you.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: That's correct.

ARTUR STELE: OK. Could you explain it, please?

ALEXANDER BRYANT: Mr. Chairman, 15 and 16 was not a part of the amendment, just starting at 16 and 17.

ARTUR STELE: Yes. Sorry for the confusion.

What happened was that we were not ready to put it on the screen, and then we asked our secretary to read it. And so we amended what was read, really, and not what was on the screen. Sorry for that.

We are going to microphone 6. Speaking to the same motion, Michael Hamilton.

MICHAEL HAMILTON: Thank you, Brother Chair.

I feel that the element of prepastoral care is missing from this recommendation. Sometimes members are aggrieved and impulsively request that their names be taken from the church books. And if we allow their names to be taken without adequate pastoral care, I feel that we are doing an injustice to them. I feel we should allow time for pastors and other members and leaders in the church to counsel with them before their names are taken from the church books.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you for your recommendation.

HARALD WOLLAN: Mr. Chairman?

ARTUR STELE: Yes, please.

HARALD WOLLAN: I just want to clarify. The issue of pastoral care is actually covered in one of the last items that we are dealing with.

We are talking about nurture and retention, and what we are bringing to you is a major addition based on the decisions that were taken following the nurture and retention summit. And that part always has to proceed, but we still need to maintain the individual's right to determine where his or her membership is to be held. We have no right to tell others that they cannot withdraw their membership at the time that they so desire.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. We go now to microphone 4, Stoy Proctor.

STOY PROCTOR: Yes. On both of these issues, I hope we've given consideration to pastoral care, and we want to try to encourage members to stay in the church. But if someone makes a mistake and we want to discipline them, is there, in the one we just voted, a provision to be made there for us to really try to woo them back or to help them correct their mistake or to help them stay in the church?

And if they want to stay in the church, they want to attend church, can they still attend church? Because in some churches I've known, they're not allowed to go to church. And so I wanted to know if we can address this issue, that we really give special attention to these people that have made mistakes and these people also that request disfellowship from the church, that we give attention to their needs and see if we can't woo them back and retain them.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you.

HARALD WOLLAN: Thank you. It's quite an important observation that you are dealing with, and it's true. If you read in all of the sections here, it says, "Efforts should be made to restore the individual to church family." And of course they are welcome to attend church even though they don't have their membership there. Our churches are open. You don't have to be a member to come visit our church.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. Now we go to microphone 6, Boyce Mkhize.

BOYCE MKHIZE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue of membership is not a private matter. You are a member, and your acceptance into membership becomes a public issue. The considerations say that the broader body of the church will be interfering with your individual rights in considering the letter of resignation. Therefore, it does not resonate with the very character of membership as we have come to know it.

When you sign up for membership as a member of the church, the church votes to accept you into its membership. While we recognize the right of a member to resign, I think it is important that the church, which is the body that accepts the member into membership, should be the one finally that is notified of that particular resignation, even if we respect the right of that individual.

I think that's the first comment. And, of course, when we refrain from discussing the issues surrounding the resignation, it is out of respect and decorum to that particular member. And I think that right should be protected.

But the second point that this raises is the issue of renunciation. Renunciation, when a member resigns, it simply means the church loses jurisdiction over that member, in terms of whatever action and/or control it may otherwise exercise on the member. And therefore, in certain circumstances, you might find that the member resigns as a measure to avoid discipline being meted out. And the amendment, unfortunately, does not take us to those kind of circumstances and how to deal with the issues pertaining to that resignation as a measure to avert discipline.

Third, the amendment also does not talk to us about what the implications would be in terms of that member wishing to rejoin church, basically retracting their previous resignation.

And it is because of these considerations that I do feel, Mr. Chairman, that the matter needs to go back with some measure of deliberation, particularly on issues pertaining to what happens when this is occasioned by the desire to avert discipline, and also, what happens in cases of a reinstatement, particularly where the conduct has been less than desirable or not in accord with the principles that are established for the church in terms of membership. Unfortunately, the next area, which we are still to come to, which talks about reinstating those previously removed, does not address this particular aspect

that I'm raising now. And, therefore, that gap will still exist. And I would possibly propose this goes back to the committee to consider those two points, which I consider very important. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. The next one is microphone 4, David Trim.

DAVID TRIM: Thank you, Brother Chairman. The intention here seems to be achieve clarity and consistency, but there is still a little bit of inconsistency on what happens with a resignation. It's stated most clearly on page 100 (which is an amendment to page 80), where it says very clearly, "The church clerk has no authority to add or to remove names . . . except in the case of the death of a member, or when a member requests in writing to be removed from membership."

So that's very clear.

But if we go back to page 99, it actually says the clerk has no authority to remove names or add names to the membership record except by the vote of the church. And then there's a separate sentence about the church board having to act on a request.

So the problem is, there's still a little bit of inconsistency between the amendment to pages 54 and 55 and to page 80.

And so I think the danger is that in some churches they are going to look at it and say, "Oh, the church clerk has to record the action of the board, but then it also needs to go to a vote of the church membership to remove the name from the roll, because that's what it says."

And so I would just suggest a minor emendation, which could perhaps be done by common consent, which is to page 99, line 13, to change the full stop after "church" to a comma and add "except." And then that would achieve complete clarity between the two sections. And perhaps one could also add the cross-reference, "See page 80." But, at any rate, if the "except" is added there, it would avoid any possibility of confusion.

So I would move that we adopt that as an amendment.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Mr. Chairman, if you allow me. David is right. And Harald just mentioned a few moments ago that we can just add a special sentence there in order to be consistent. So there is no problem if we do that and the body accepts this add-in.

ARTUR STELE: OK. So there is a motion. Now, I need to ask the body, should we make the adjustment by common consent, or you would prefer to move it back for the committee to work on it? What would be your preference? Are you comfortable to adjust it since the committee chair and the secretary said they recognize it needs to be done?

If you are willing to do it, please show it by raising your cards.

Thank you.

Those against?

So we have done it by common consent. Thank you very much.

We are back to the main motion. We have a speaker at the microphone 6, Delight Ngwira.

DELIGHT NGWIRA: Mr. Chairman, the speaker who just spoke on this mike covered my point.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. You are really helping the chair. Microphone 6, Mxolisi Sokupa.

MXOLISI SOKUPA: Mr. Chairman, the point I wanted to make has also been covered. However, the aspect of this matter being finished here is a bit problematic, because there are implications that have been mentioned such as a member returning to membership with details that need to be taken care of. How does a member come back into membership after a resignation? I feel that those matters need to be tidied up so that we are clear on the implications of this change.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. We go to microphone 1, Luis Tavares.

LUIS TAVARES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My point is solved, although I'd like to leave a few words.

As a church elder, I used to face problems in the church that I think we all face. Just to avoid those thoughts that this decision is not correct, I'd like to share a few things.

When we respect a member's desire to withdraw their membership, it helps the church with a few issues. For example, we may be facing the problem of having the member using our pulpit in a condition that they avoid God's blessing over the pulpit or over the congregation only because they are ashamed of seeing their issues being treated in the board.

So when a member has the right to, without telling everyone what their sin is, have their life being considered when they have this opportunity only to write a letter and say, “I don’t want to be included on the church books as a member,” we need to preach to use the pulpit. It helps the church.

I agree with the decision of having the adjustment in which we should add a phrase like “unless a member” as according to the decision of sharing the information with the church. But it’s OK if we don’t have to vote on this decision, because it helps, actually, the church. It will help with the matter of having people preaching in the pulpit while avoiding God’s blessing of the church. Thank you.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. We go to microphone 2, Pedro Pozos.

PEDRO POZOS: Thank you.

I apologize for the comment that I’m going to make. I hope it is not taken the wrong way. To be honest, I didn’t know that a member can resign. I mean, they leave all the time. So, to me, if a member wants to resign, he or she means business, and that change should be made immediately. And this is why, if for some reason this member who does not want to be part of the family anymore goes out and does something that puts the church reputation in jeopardy or creates some sort of a lawsuit, then we’re liable. So, yes, efforts should be made to maybe bring him or her back, not abandon him or her, but that change—I do think that has to be effective immediately.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. We go now to microphone 6, Onalenna Balapi.

ONALENNA BALAPI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a little challenge with a member leaving the church without the consensus of the whole body of the family of the church. I wish the committee had also considered the fact that some of the members are actually church workers.

Now, when it comes to an issue of discipline and this person is a worker, the person can actually get away with the situation simply by resigning, and therefore, when he or she has resigned, no action can be taken against that person, even though he or she is a church worker. I think it’s wisdom that the whole church be involved in the resignation of its member, just as well as it was involved in the entrance of this person into his membership. Thank you.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. We go to the microphone 5, Lawrence Tanabose.

LAWRENCE TANABOSE: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to just inform the chair that though we agree that amendments should be made, there are other statements that we have overlooked. For example, on page 101 it still maintains the notion that a person of the other SDA church may be working hard to bring the person back into the membership of the church. The statement says here, beginning on line 20, “The church where the person is requesting reinstatement must seek information from the former church about the reason for which the person was removed from membership.”

Now, if we are going to maintain that statement in there, I cannot see how can we correlate that with the amendment that we are suggesting, because the other church will be requesting the reasons the person want his or her name to be removed.

So I think—I’m just suggesting—that the *Church Manual* Committee actually take the whole issue of requesting release and reinstatement and look at it carefully, so that we can come to one consensus statement. Thank you.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you.

HARALD WOLLAN: Mr. Chair.

ARTUR STELE: Yes, please.

HARALD WOLLAN: Brother Tanabose, this issue about the person coming to church, if we consider a person who has requested to be deleted from membership, that information should be given to the new church. But if there is additional information, that also should be shared with the church so they know that the person they are accepting into church membership actually is in regular standing or going to be in regular standing.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. We have no speakers.

Are you ready to vote on the main motion?

Those in favor, please show it by raising your cards. Thank you.

Those against, the same sign.

Thank you. It is carried.

Next item.

HARALD WOLLAN: Item 410. We are dealing with reinstating those previously removed from membership, and on line 11 we are trying to include that a person is removed for discipline. So if a person is removed from membership for discipline, the church should, where possible, maintain contact with the individual and manifest the spirit of friendship and love, endeavoring and so on. Those previously people removed, it says on line 14, may be received again into membership when confessing of wrongs committed is made, evidence is . . . and so on.

The reason we are deleting the “period assigned by the church in a business meeting” is that a church can assign a period only when we are talking about discipline in the form of censure. When we are talking about discipline in the form of removing from membership, there is no time, attached to it. And if a person is to be readmitted, we are simply holding to the principle that the individual then will have to show evidence of proper conversion and so on.

And that’s why we also, on lines 30 and 31, have deleted something, so the sentence reads, “Because removal from membership is the most serious form of discipline, the period of time before members may be reinstated should be sufficient to demonstrate that the issues which led to the removal from membership have been resolved beyond reasonable doubt.” In other words, the individuals who have been relieved from membership because of discipline need to show that there is repentance and remorse and the person has begun a new life.

So I move the acceptance of this change.

ARTUR STELE: All right. It has been moved.

Is there a second?

Yes, there is.

And I see at the mike 2 a speaker. Larry Boggess, please.

LARRY BOGGESS: Mr. Chairman, I am in full support of this document. However, I do have a question that has come into play via risk management. When a person has been disciplined because of

child abuse, there is a process that they are recommending that these individuals go back through. And I don't see that in this document, and I'm wondering if that needs to be studied.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. We'll interrupt now our discussions. I see the chair and the secretary of the Nominating Committee are here, and they are ready to give us a report.

HOMER TRECARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Nominating Committee has gone through many names, but we're still contacting people, so we're only making some of the report right now. Later today we hope to make another report. For the third report, Dr. Leslie Pollard will share the names with you. We actually have three groups of names that we will be voting on.

LESLIE POLLARD: Thank you very much, Brother Chairman. For the position of undertreasurer, with the promotion of Dr. Prestol, presenting the name from the Nominating Committee, Mr. Ray Wahlen as undertreasurer of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

And I move it.

ARTUR STELE: OK. It has been moved. I see a point of order.

Let me first ask: Is there a second?

Yes, there is a second.

Point of order on microphone 2, Julie Keymer.

JULIE KEYMER: Mr. Chairman, I have a request from the Nominating Committee's chairmen that when they bring names to the floor, that they also give us some information on some of these names. As a lay leader, I don't know many of these people's names. And it would be helpful from here on, when we hear from the Nominating Committee, to find out if they are an incumbent, if they've been in that position for a while, and if it is a new person to the post. Thank you.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. Maybe you can give some more information on the name.

LESLIE POLLARD: Yes. In response to the question of our delegate, Mr. Ray Wahlen had served previously as an associate treasurer of the General Conference. And, of course, with the opening created with the election of Dr. Prestol-Puesán, the undertreasurer position became available, and he was asked to serve in that capacity.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. I see several of the mikes. Microphone 6, Emmanuel Mwale.

EMMANUEL MWALE: This one was referring to the discussions—

ARTUR STELE: OK. Thank you. And the point of order is also to the other issue?

OK. Point of order, microphone 4, Gina Brown.

GINA BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The point of order comes in to add to what the young lady just said. We are asking, because we are a worldwide church made up of different nationalities, regions, people, that also the ethnic background, racial makeup, and home division be given for each of the nominees.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. It's really not a point of order, and I see no one at the mikes.

I would like to ask you to vote. Are you ready to vote?

ARTUR STELE: Microphone 2. Tara VinCross.

TARA VIN CROSS: Hello. Good afternoon. At whatever point you think this would be appropriate, either before—I would like to address, or the chair to address, a need for a way of privately voting. This morning we were talking about retrying these or coming forward with another way. And I would like to do that before we get further with the Nominating Committee report, if possible.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. We have really planned in a few minutes there will be some exercise on the issue.

TARA VIN CROSS: So will you be voting the Nominating Committee report, you're saying, with public ballot?

ARTUR STELE: Yes.

TARA VIN CROSS: Is there a way that we can test the system and then use that system for the Nominating Committee report?

I have no challenge to these names. He's excellent. Just out of principle for the future reports, I think it might be helpful for us to find a good system.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. At this time we really don't have a working system, you know, and this makes it very difficult. So if you could be so kind and allow us to proceed, we promise we will try to solve it even today.

TARA VIN CROSS: OK.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much for your kindness.

All those in favor of—

Point of order. It is not scanned in. All right.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't have my badge, but she does.

ARTUR STELE: OK. Then I ask you to vote. All those in favor—

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman?

ARTUR STELE: —please show it by your card.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman?

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. Thank you.

Those against.

It is taken care of. Thank you very much.

LESLIE POLLARD: Brother Chairman, we'd like to present the names of the associate treasurers as a block. These three names are already serving in the General Conference in these positions. They are being recommended for continuation.

Mr. Timothy Aka, Mr. George Egwakhe, and Mrs. Daisy Orion. I move it.

ARTUR STELE: It has been moved. Is there a second?

It has been seconded.

They already have been working in these positions. Many of you know them.

I see at microphone 3 a speaker, Raymond Hartwell.

RAYMOND HARTWELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With a smile on my face, I remember the words of Ronald Reagan as I make a point of order: "I paid for this microphone."

Mr. Chairman, a point of order again. The electronic devices have been working since Friday, and I respectfully ask that we honor the voting by electronic devices so that we can have anonymous and secret-ballot voting, please.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. Unfortunately, it's not working yet. This was a desire to do it from the first day. But thank you for raising it. We will try to do our best as soon as we can.

All right. Are you ready to vote? Thank you.

Those who are for supporting the motion, please raise your cards.

Thank you very much.

Those who are against, the same sign.

Thank you. It is carried.

LESLIE POLLARD: And, Brother Chairman, these recommendations are in the area of the Secretariat, and the positions are for the associate secretaries. They are continuing in their present positions. The names recommended by Nominating Committee for associate secretary, Mr. Gary Krause, Ms. Karen Porter, Mr. John Thomas.

And I move each of them.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. It has been moved. Is there a second? Thank you. You know these people. They have been already working in these positions. I see no one at the mikes. Are you ready to vote?

Those in favor, please show it by raising your cards.

Thank you very much.

Those opposed, the same sign.

There seems to be none. Thank you very much. It is carried.

HOMER TRECARTIN: And I think they are in the back here ready to come out so that we can introduce them.

ARTUR STELE: All right. Please invite them in so that we can see them.

I hope they have not changed their mind.

[Applause.]

We are very blessed by this dedicated group of people. And we see Gary even brought his daughter.

Thank you very much. We wish you God's blessings, and we hope that the Lord will use you for His honor and glory. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

All right. We are going back to the *Church Manual*.

So we are returning back to the issue that was already presented, the motion, and we had people lined up at the mikes, and we interrupted. Sorry for that. We are now going to microphone 6, and the speaker will be Emmanuel Mwale.

EMMANUEL MWALE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. While appreciating the fact that we are saying the time frame given to a person who was removed before they could be reinstated should be sufficient, we still have a challenge that we are facing. In the conferences we have this fight that this person shall be censured for a period of one month to 12 months inclusive. And then for dropping, we have not this fight; we have left it to the discretion of the church.

The problem we have here is if a person has been censured for, say, 12 months, and then another person has been dropped and there's no specific time given for a person who has been dropped, the possibility could be after three months, if the church feels that it's sufficient time for that person to be reinstated, they will be reinstated. But another person who is censured for 12 months, if censure is less serious than the removal, there will be a challenge there, where a person who has been dropped is reinstated after three months or six months and the one who is censured for 12 months remained on censure. So the issue of leaving the time frame with respect to a person has been proved to the discretion of the church causes a challenge here.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. Would you like to respond?

ARMANDO MIRANDA: We consider, Brother Chairman, that it's the right of each church to determine the appropriate time in order to receive again those that were removed from the church. Each case is different. So we cannot just establish a rule for all of the churches everywhere, because they are the ones who are dealing with the situation, and they know exactly each person that is involved in the disciplinary action. By removing the person or by censure, the church needs to determine, but we consider it not appropriate to establish for the world church exactly the same.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. We go to microphone 6, Webster Chabe.

WEBSTER CHABE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I recall that when we were discussing the previous item, one speaker brought out an important issue that I feel must be considered when we are dealing with the current item. How do we handle a person who resigns when they want to come back? I think that one was apparently ignored, but it's vital for us to know how to handle that. Do we rebaptize them? Do we accept them by profession of faith? What do we do? I think it's important that when we are talking about reinstatement, we consider that matter.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much.

We go to microphone 2, Cheryl Simmons.

CHERYL SIMMONS: Mr. Chair, my question is not dealing with the issue right now, but the fact that we were promised that we would check the electronic voting device either this morning or the first when we come back. That has not been done. And I feel that we need to do this as soon as possible so that we can have secret ballots, because some fear that they are not able to do that.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. We are waiting every minute for the people who will introduce the item and help us to check it to come in. So as soon as they get here, we will do it. We are waiting every minute. Thank you.

Microphone 6, Deppington Papu.

DEPPINGTON PAPU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the explanation given is a little bit confusing, because the recommendation is that the period must be sufficient. But who determines that the

period is sufficient? Because the original read that the church in a business meeting will assign the period. So if the church cannot assign the period, who will determine that the period is sufficient?

HARALD WOLLAN: Mr. Chairman?

ARTUR STELE: Yes, please.

HARALD WOLLAN: What we are saying is that you cannot, in advance, determine whether a period is sufficient. Whether a period is sufficient is proved by the life of the individual and whether there is a conversion or not. Who determines it? Of course, it is the church. But what we are saying is that this determination comes after. You cannot prophesy how long a person is going to behave in such a manner that he cannot be a member.

DEPPINGTON PAPU: Sorry. Mr. Chairman, but for censure, we are allowed to be prophetic.

HARALD WOLLAN: No.

DEPPINGTON PAPU: Because according to this—

HARALD WOLLAN: No. Mr. Chairman, let me answer this question.

ARTUR STELE: Yes, please.

HARALD WOLLAN: We are not dealing with a prophetic issue when it comes to censure. What we are doing with censure is that if an individual has done something that bring reproach to the church, we say, “We give you a certain time to improve. If you do not within this time frame actually conform to the rules and regulations and the norm of the church, then we might need to take another action.”

ARTUR STELE: Thank you.

DEPPINGTON PAPU: Just the last—

ARTUR STELE: Yes.

DEPPINGTON PAPU: The last comment, Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR STELE: Please.

DEPPINGTON PAPU: The fear is that sufficient time may not be given, that the time may be even shorter than the one given for censure. And we need to protect the church and the member. Because

a church may determine that maybe after 10 years, that's sufficient time. And the member may think maybe after three weeks, that's sufficient time.

HARALD WOLLAN: Mr. Chairman?

ARTUR STELE: Yes, please.

HARALD WOLLAN: Mr. Chairman, I trust the common sense of the church.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. There seems to be no one at the mikes. It appears to me that we are ready to vote on the main motion, on the motion on the floor.

Those who are supporting the motion, please show it by raising your cards.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

Opposed, also show it by raising your cards.

Thank you. It is carried.

I have a point of order, microphone 6, Boyce Mkhize.

BOYCE MKHIZE: Yes, sir. I was rushing to the mike when you were calling for a vote.

ARTUR STELE: So I was saved by technology, huh? Sorry for that.

BOYCE MKHIZE: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I became slower than the vote.

ARTUR STELE: Sorry for that.

BOYCE MKHIZE: I have a challenge with this proposition, Mr. Chairman, simply because I wonder about its theological soundness. There are two things that come out here. First of all, we employ the issue of time and use time as if it were a measure demonstrating the reformation of character, and that can never be a measure. Time, duration can never be a measure. That's the one aspect.

So our yardstick for determining the extent to which a member has reformed or not is incorrect in the first place.

Second, we employ a dangerous legal phraseology here when we say membership have been resolved beyond reasonable doubt.

Now, the standard of proof when you talk about beyond reasonable doubt means there must be no other doubt that exists in your mind about that particular individual. And none of us sitting in the church business meeting or church board can vouch for the conduct of a member beyond a reasonable doubt.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. Thank you.

BOYCE MKHIZE: I think this particular clause is a clause that really requires further study by the *Church Manual* Committee for a reconsideration and review of this particular aspect, especially the issue of time that is being introduced or that is being said here, because that can never be a measure for determining reformation of character or the change.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you.

BOYCE MKHIZE: And also the theological soundness around it. If somebody has fallen today and they want to come to Jesus the very next month, who are we as a church to stand in their way?

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. I'm sorry that I have allowed you to speak, because it was not a point of order, and also the item was already taken care of. But I wanted to respect that you tried to come at the time, but somehow it didn't work out.

We have another point of order at the microphone 3, Ray Roennfeldt.

RAY ROENNFELDT: Sorry, Mr. Chair, I just wanted to sight that that was not a point of order.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you.

RAY ROENNFELDT: And I wish the chair to make sure that points of order are actually points of order.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you for educating the chair. I appreciate that very much.

OK. There are no motions on the floor, but there is a speaker who wants to speak. Microphone 2.

GEORGE KING: Mr. Chairman, I just want to comment on the good work that the *Church Manual* Committee has done and to let us know that we have spent a considerable amount of time on rules and regulations. I would like to suggest that the next time we have to deal with the manual that we spend more time on how we go about restoring the membership of our church rather than

disfellowshipping and other stuff. Let us spend a little more time on how we can restore our members so that they can love God and everybody can love God better.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much for your concern. It is a very valuable concern, and you really have demonstrated a pastoral heart that we really need.

And you wanted to say something?

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Only to say that we have a section on nurture and retention, but it's important also to take this kind of recommendation. But we already voted, but there is a time when we are going to discuss that issue that you mentioned.

ARTUR STELE: Let us introduce another item.

HARALD WOLLAN: Thank you. Number 411. The issue we are dealing with here is to include on page 122 in the *Church Manual* the same wording as we have on page 73. That is why we, on lines 14 and 15, are adding "ordained/commissioned" instead of just "ordained." So the section will read "Who May Conduct the Communion Service—The communion service is to be conducted by an ordained/commissioned pastor or an ordained elder. Deacons or deaconesses are not permitted to conduct the service."

I'd like to move this.

ARTUR STELE: OK. It is moved. Is there a second? Thank you. There are many seconds.

Now I see someone moving to the mikes, although there is no one on the screen yet. Let's wait a minute. OK. There is one. The speaker at microphone 4, Mario Veloso, please.

MARIO VELOSO: Thank you, Brother Chairman. Two items in this one. First, according to your advice, we should not consider anything that belongs to Wednesday, and we should probably do better waiting for that time. And the second one, if they were pastor, we already referred one item to clarify the matter of ministers and pastors. So I would like to move to table this one until the proper time.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Brother Chairman?

ARTUR STELE: Yes, please.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: If you allow me. We already have the word “commissioned” in the *Church Manual*. It’s part of the current manual that we voted and accepted in 2010. This recommendation is only to be in harmony with what we have in page 73 of the current manual. It says—

ARTUR STELE: Unfortunately, the item that has been raised is really an item that we are not bringing to the floor. It has not been changed. It was already there.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Brother Chair?

ARTUR STELE: Yes.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: On page 73 it says, “Conducting Church Services—. . . Communion services must always be conducted by an ordained/commissioned pastor or local elder.” So we are not bringing this as a new inclusion for the *Church Manual*. It’s just, as I mentioned, to be in harmony with something that we already have in the *Church Manual*.

ARTUR STELE: Would it be OK with you, Dr. Veloso, if we go without having a motion on it, since we are really not bringing it as a new item?

MARIO VELOSO: Brother Chairman, since it is open to the floor, it is for new consideration of the item. And since it is related to an item that we have referred for Wednesday, the proper way to proceed would be, to my understanding, to wait until that time.

And the other item, the word “pastor,” that we already referred to the committee for consideration, should be in harmony with the other one, so we must wait for what is going to come at the proper time with the other item.

ARTUR STELE: OK. Thank you very much. Unfortunately, I cannot accept the motion since it will be actually out of order, since the word “pastor” is not for discussion. The motion is on wording beyond the word “pastor.”

MARIO VELOSO: Anyway, then you leave us only the possibility to vote this down.

ARTUR STELE: Well, we will see if the body wants to vote it down. It will be the privilege of the body.

I see here several speakers, microphone 6, Emmanuel Mwale.

EMMANUEL MWALE: Mr. Chairman, I have a similar view, but since you are saying it's not for discussion, I may leave it. The way I saw it was that it's ordained/commissioned pastor. The "commissioned" part there has an effect on what will be discussed on Wednesday. Thank you.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. Let me ask your understanding and support. Would you agree for us to stop the discussion now, since we now have the people who will be addressing the issue of the voting? Would that be OK with you? Are you comfortable with that? OK. We are stopping the discussion. We keep all the names, and now we move to discuss the issue of the electronic vote. Please.

TED N. C. WILSON: Fellow delegates, Brother Chair, and all those who have been carrying on in a valiant manner here in the main auditorium, we intend to try this system once more.

Let me explain to you that it has been our intention that this system would work and work nicely, that it would work efficiently. It would have made our work much easier. And yet for certain reasons, some of which include additional Wi-Fi signals in this auditorium and other related activities, the system has not worked. It has worked for large, major corporations that need to make multimillion-dollar, perhaps even billion-dollar, decisions. It had been our full intention that this should be a system that would work.

Unfortunately up to this time, it has not performed to the point where we have confidence. We intend to take one more attempt. And, believe me: I wish the system had worked from the very beginning. I have accepted that this would be the best way to proceed, but it has not. So we are intending now to do the same type of test that we did the other day. And if it is not successful, we'll have a recommendation to the body.

We want to encourage you, when we take this test—for we will do it right now. Our attorney and chief counsel, Karnik Doukmetzian, will be explaining to you some of the facets of this. But we would like to encourage everyone who has a device in their possession to use it. So when you are asked to stand and to show your device (and we will count out who you are), then we will also expect that everyone who has stood with a device, who is an official delegate—and you shouldn't have one of these unless you are an official delegate—will actually use the device.

We will also be very careful to tell you not to vote until we see the numbers beginning to move on the screen, so there will be no question about pushing this button before the system actually can accept it. So that's very critical. So let me just tell you: Do not push any button, 1 or 2, until you see the numbers actually begin to move from 45 seconds and on down. Wait until the thing actually moves.

The other thing that I would urge you to do is to pretend that nothing exists on this pad except 1A and 2B. That's all you need to think about.

When we had the demonstration the other day, I noticed that there were a number of people who apparently had pushed other buttons. Please do not push any other buttons except 1A or 2B. Those are the only buttons that should appear in your mind and in your intention for this special voting device.

We have a paper ballot system in place, a paper system that will ensure, as much as that is secure, a fair voting approach. So if this system does not work, we will use that system.

However, as you can imagine, that system is more cumbersome, it is more laborious, it takes time to count the votes.

So I am hoping that on many points we can use the cards. However, for important votes that people are very concerned about, we will use a secret ballot, whether it is with the machine, if it works, or with a paper ballot.

Please be assured we will not ask you to vote on sensitive items by holding up your card. Please be assured of that.

I might also indicate to you that when you are voting, please—any vote, I don't care what vote it is—it is your sacred responsibility to vote according to your conscience and information of what you have studied, what you have understood, and what the Holy Spirit has impressed you with. You are not to vote because someone told you to vote a certain way. You are to vote in accordance with your own conscience between you and God on anything, whether it is a minor editorial change or whether it is a major item.

I'm going to ask Attorney Doukmetzian to come and to explain to us the process we will use again. And let me just deeply thank you for the patience that you have exhibited. I know some of you are very frustrated. We are equally, if not more so, frustrated because the system has not worked. It was

supposed to be a beautiful, efficient system. And, in fact, it probably is perhaps in another location. But we will do one more test.

Perhaps before our chief counsel explains to us some procedures, I'd like to ask Bob Lemon, our esteemed former treasurer now, wonderful colleague, one in whom we have great confidence, just to say a few words about our intention, and then our chief counsel will share with us. Thank you for your patience. Thank you for your kind spirit toward this unintended and unanticipated problem.

BOB LEMON: Thanks, Ted. I just want to comment. When I was on the Nominating Committee the first time we used electronic ballot voting, we had struggles, but we got it voting. Without the electronic voting on the Nominating Committee, it would take days more. We made every effort to try to get a system here that would work.

One thing we need to remember, please: If you are outside of the delegate area that's being counted, don't push any buttons. If you're behind the stage here, if you're up here on the stage where we are, if you're a delegate and you're back beyond the delegate section, don't push your button, because that will not get counted on the physical count. But let's try and all do it together, and let's pray that the Lord will help it to work.

Can we bow our heads for a word of prayer?

[Prayer.]

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: OK. Are we ready to do this again? As Elder Lemon mentioned, you need to be in the delegate seating area for this exercise to work, so those of you that are moving in the hallways or in the walkways at this point, please take a seat so that you can be included in the exercise.

First of all, we will do a hand count, and after the numbers have been tabulated, we will do an electronic count. I would like to ask all the delegates to stand with your voting device in your hand. If you don't have a voting device in your hand, please do not participate. Sit down.

Divisions have chosen individuals to do the count. They will be counting your hand with the voting device. Please show them your device so they can count it. As they have finished counting, you may sit down.

Those of you that are counting, once you have finished the count, please bring the numbers to the undersecretary, Myron Iseminger, seated here in the front corner.

I see one group standing, Dr. Ryan.

Once the numbers have been tabulated, we will project them on the screen.

OK. Now we have the physical count completed. We will proceed with the electronic count. The same individuals that voted by standing the first time, please stand again.

With the voting device in your hands, please press number 1A or number 2B. Not yet. Just wait. Wait until we have on the screen that the vote is ready to proceed and we see the clock.

Please vote now, pressing number 1 or number 2. Do not hold it longer than pushing the button. Do not hold it for a long period of time. Push it and release it.

Push it only once, please.

As soon as you have voted, please sit down.

OK. We have completed the exercise. The chair will take us through the rest of it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Could I ask a question, please? I'd like to ask our attorney if it's possible to see if we could, by divisions, know what the counts are, because it may be that certain areas in the auditorium aren't working.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. We appreciate your question. The technicians are really working. They have tried to check every corner here. Unfortunately—

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Could we get a count by divisions?

ARTUR STELE: We need a system that we all have confidence in.

TED N. C. WILSON: Brother Chair and all of you, this morning as we reviewed this in the Steering Committee, we took an action or an agreement that if the variance from those standing and the count from the device was a difference of 51 votes or more, we would not accept the electronic system voting anymore.

So, unfortunately, the result has shown a great difference between those standing and those using the actual system.

So we would propose to this body—but we want the body to vote it. We would propose, Brother Chairman, and I would move that we cease any further attempts to use the electronic system, and we won't use the electronic system to vote on that. We will use, I would suggest, Brother Chair, simply the cards. But that is up to you. Our advice is that we do not use the electronic system any longer. We would then use, for very special votes, the paper system that has been in place for that particular use. But we would like you to confirm that recommendation with a vote.

So, Brother Chair, I move that we use the secret ballot system of paper when it is needed and then the cards when it is appropriate.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. It was seconded. Yes. All right.

So are you ready to vote on it?

I see or hear yeses.

Those in favor, please raise your cards.

Thank you very much.

Those against, also raise your cards.

It is carried.

So we'll do no more attempts. We will use the way we have handled the voting today unless there are some sensitive issues.

BERIT ELKJAER: Mr. Chairman? Point of order, Mr. Chairman?

ARTUR STELE: Well, I don't see it yet. Have you registered yourself?

BERIT ELKJAER: Yes, I have.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: Now that we have voted not to use the electronic system any longer, we would like to give you some instructions on getting rid of these machines from your hands.

BERIT ELKJAER: Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR STELE: I will give you after my—

BERIT ELKJAER: My point of order directly corresponds to his directions.

ARTUR STELE: OK. You can speak.

BERIT ELKJAER: I was going to speak against the motion, but I wasn't given that opportunity. And my concern is that since so much money was spent for these devices and they have not worked, what would it hurt in doing it division by division to find out where the problem actually lies? We could have an accurate count if we did it by division.

[Applause.]

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. We already voted on the item.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: All right. So we'd like to give you some instructions on what to do with these units. You are aware that there are desks with computers where you slide your badge in order to be able to speak. Those individuals at those positions have been instructed to receive your electronic devices. At some point during the day today, tomorrow, whenever you have the chance during the next two days, go and visit those individuals, let them scan your badge, and turn in your electronic device.

Remember, if you don't turn in your device, there is a cost. So make sure everyone turns in their device. And if there are people that are not here—we had 2,500 delegates registered who picked up a device, but only 1,700 here today at this point. Please tell the rest of them to turn in their electronic voting devices as well.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. We have several points of order. At the microphone 6 there is a point of order. Megan Mole.

MEGAN MOLE: Respectfully I move to reconsider the motion to stop attempting to use the electronic voting system that we just voted. There were several points of order that didn't have time to be considered before the motion was voted. And I feel that, as per *General Conference Rules of Order* point 4(d), that the previous motion should thus be reconsidered.

ARTUR STELE: Do we have a second?

It's a debatable issue. Are there those who would like to speak to the issue? If not, then we will vote.

We see here two points of order. Now one. Raymond Hartwell. Are you speaking to this one?

RAYMOND HARTWELL: Mr. Chairman, I'm willing to wait until you handle this one to speak to a prior point of order. Thank you.

ARTUR STELE: All right. OK. Now we will vote. I see there is another point of order and another one and another one.

You know, let us not use the system to destroy our vote. Let's really find out if the body would like to reconsider. This was the motion. If you would like—

ALVIN KIBBLE: Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR STELE: Yes.

ALVIN KIBBLE: I would like to speak in support of the previous speaker. I believe that there would be value in allowing us to have a division of the house by division territory to see if there is some inaccuracy in the voting process using the electronic devices by division. It seems to be a reasonable request if the chair will so allow it.

ARTUR STELE: Well, we have to make an announcement. Please don't return the devices before we move or vote on the motion.

ALVIN KIBBLE: Brilliant.

ARTUR STELE: Now I see there are new points of order. What is happening? Let us not play games. Let us find out if the body wants to reconsider it or not. Is it OK if you vote on it?

I'm asking the body: If you would like to reconsider the issue, then please vote now.

Thank you.

If you don't want to reconsider, then vote now.

There is no applauding.

The motion has failed.

There is another point of order, please. Microphone 6, Berit Elkjaer.

BERIT ELKJAER: I just wonder, is there a possibility to go out and get another system that could be ready for tomorrow?

ARTUR STELE: Unfortunately, it is not possible, because, as you know, the General Conference administration has tried really hard to find the best, most reliable company that works and deals with big, big conventions and decision-making bodies, and we have actually found the best one. We had all the assurance that it would work. And it took time to discover it, because you need a system that will not be open to interference from anyone. And so you see what happened with the best.

But don't be disappointed. It is not the first General Conference session. It is session number 60. And up to now, we always had a way to vote. And since we have been promised that if there is a very sensitive issue, we will have secret ballots, yes, it will take some more time, but it will at least ensure that we will have the opportunity to deal with this.

Yes, please. There is another point of order, microphone 3, Prudence Pollard.

PRUDENCE POLLARD: I encourage your patience and would like to thank you for your patience, sir.

ARTUR STELE: You are very kind. Thank you.

PRUDENCE POLLARD: If I may point out a couple of items. And if the chair would demonstrate his patience again with us, the voting body, I would be most appreciative.

Mr. Chair, we have been told that the vote of the people who stood differs from the electronic vote. Am I correct, Mr. Chair?

ARTUR STELE: Yes.

PRUDENCE POLLARD: May I propose, Mr. Chair, that given the device that we're using, that we may have two problems: The first problem is a statistical problem, which would require us to have a conversation with the statistician for the company that we have hired; the second one is an easier one for us to implement right here on this floor, Mr. Chair. May I suggest that, given that the signal is transmitted digitally, we have a problem in transmission, and therefore it is not a problem in the count. The count is a recording of a digital signal. Therefore the question is To what extent do we have a digital signal that is able to pick up all of the votes?

Therefore, Mr. Chair, I think we can easily check that. The previous call for us to take a vote by division would allow us to know the areas of this floor where the signal is incapable of picking up the vote of the membership.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. Thank you—

PRUDENCE POLLARD: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for implementing a solution that takes us to the core of the problem, which at this point appears not to be the actual vote but the ability to record or to capture the vote, which can be easily verified. We have not verified that to date. Thank you.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. As you know, it's not a point of order, and it was already voted, and it was already reconsidered, so let us close a chapter and move on.

You know, at this time, we will really be not able—we can continue, continue searching, investigating. But we have tried and had so many attempts, so let us move on with the business, with the mission of our church.

There is a point of order at the microphone 2, Raymond Hartwell.

RAYMOND HARTWELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a genuine point of order. It appears that different delegates have attempted to raise a point of order or speak at microphone 3, and the scanning device is not getting them up to you in time and the vote keeps moving on. So perhaps we need to check if the equipment is working at microphone 3. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR STELE: OK. Thank you very much. Please, if you could check, those responsible, if the microphone 3 and all the equipment that is connected to this mike works properly. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Now, we have another point of order at microphone 2, Elizabeth Talbot.

ELIZABETH TALBOT: Yes. Mr. Chair, the point of order was that when you made the motion and we seconded it, there was no discussion before we voted if we were going to go to another system, so I believe that it was out of parliamentary process.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. When I announced it, there was no one registered, and since there was no one, I invited the body to vote. But I understand that maybe I need to move more slowly. Thank you very much for your advice.

All right. We are back to the *Church Manual*. As there are a number of speakers, we are sorry we have interrupted the discussion. There are several speakers who would like to talk. It's on microphone 2, Louis Torres, please.

LOUIS TORRES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the last conversation we had, it was referred to the *Church Manual* in reference to the commissioned minister. The *Church Manual* also, on page 52, says, "The communion services must always be conducted by an ordained minister or by the elder. Only ordained ministers or ordained elders having office are qualified to do this." Inasmuch as the wording of "commissioned" contradicts the wording of page 52, it is advisable to refer this back to the committee to bring harmony not just to page 73, but to page 52. Thank you.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: We'd like to know exactly what paragraph on page 52 of the *Church Manual*. Because in the current manual, that page is referring to transferring members.

LOUIS TORRES: What I have here, Mr. Chairman—

ARTUR STELE: Yes.

LOUIS TORRES: —is the 17th edition.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: This is the—

LOUIS TORRES: —of the *Church Manual*.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: 2005. That's the 2005 edition. It is not the current one.

LOUIS TORRES: What does the current one say, then—

ARMANDO MIRANDA: It says—

LOUIS TORRES: —in reference to conduct of church service?

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Page 73: "Conduct of Church Services—Under the pastor, or in the absence of the pastor, an elder is responsible for the services of the church and must either conduct them

or arrange for someone to do so. Communion services must always be conducted by an ordained/commissioned pastor or local elder.”

Remember that in 2005 we produced and we voted by this body the new edition and reconfiguration of the *Church Manual* that took more than two years of study, going to different commissions. And at the end, after the approval of the Annual Council, we brought that initiative to this body in Atlanta, and it was approved.

LOUIS TORRES: Question, then: Does that mean, then, that the *Church Manual* does not permit any longer for it to have to be an ordained local elder?

ARMANDO MIRANDA: According to the *Church Manual* we have to follow the instruction. And here it's clear who may conduct or must conduct the communions and other functions of the local church. So this is clear. And this is the current edition of the *Church Manual*.

HARALD WOLLAN: I'm not sure we got your question. What was it? Whether it has to be a local church elder? Is that what the question was?

LOUIS TORRES: Normally speaking, what we have practiced is that a local church elder is permitted to hold communions in the absence of a pastor. An unordained pastor serving in the North American Division necessarily needs to be ordained as a local elder in order to perform the functions of the communion service, marriage, etc. If that person were not a locally ordained elder, then he or she could not perform the functions of communion or the sacraments.

HARALD WOLLAN: A local elder can still perform. And that is what this sentence says: “Communion services must always be conducted by an ordained/commissioned pastor or local elder.”

LOUIS TORRES: It has removed the “ordained local elder”?

HARALD WOLLAN: No. You cannot be a functioning elder without being ordained. In other places in the *Church Manual* it clearly states that you have to be an ordained elder to perform the communion service.

LOUIS TORRES: So it does or does not say?

HARALD WOLLAN: It does say that that person has to be a local ordained elder. That means that elders can be ordained in another church, but when they move and have membership in a new church, they're still ordained if they are elected an elder in that church.

LOUIS TORRES: So they need to be local ordained elders to do communion?

HARALD WOLLAN: Yes.

LOUIS TORRES: That's why I'm saying that what you're suggesting contradicts that, and there needs to be harmony brought in order—because if the commission position is not a locally ordained elder, then those two need to be brought together in harmony.

HARALD WOLLAN: There's no disharmony, because either you are ordained or commissioned. But if there is no ordained or commissioned pastors available, then a local ordained elder can perform the ordinance.

LOUIS TORRES: So a commissioned person without being ordained can do the function? Is what you're saying?

HARALD WOLLAN: That's what this is saying, yes.

ARTUR STELE: All right.

LOUIS TORRES: That's why I think it should be referred back so it can be studied and a recommendation brought. Thank you.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. There are a number of people who would like to speak to this motion. Microphone 2, Jay Gallimore.

JAY GALLIMORE: Yes. I just thank you, Brother Chairman. I think there's evidently some kind of mistake on page 73 five years ago. I understand the committee trying to reconcile it. But I've never understood that you can have a commissioned minister who is unordained as a local elder conduct a communion service. So somehow that needs to be corrected to say that an ordained commissioned minister, locally ordained commissioned minister. Otherwise you have a commissioned minister who can, by the manual, oversee communion without the benefit of being ordained locally.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. One announcement. Sorry for interrupting our discussion. People have started to return the voting devices, and we are not prepared yet to gather them. At 5:00, after we finish our meeting, people will be prepared, and then you can return them. So please wait till 5:00 p.m., and then we can return them. Sorry for the interruption.

We go now to microphone 4, Doug Batchelor, please.

DOUG BATCHELOR: Mr. Chairman, in light of the fact that later this week we're going to be receiving some detailed reports that follow a two-year study on the theology of ordination, and since this change in the manual is reflecting those issues, and in light of the fact that earlier today we sent back a recommendation regarding the words "pastor" and "minister," and since this item also involves the word "ordination," and it's also dealing with the sacred functions of the communion service, I'd like to return to the suggestion that we either table this motion or ask the *Church Manual* Committee to at least postpone it until those definitions are given. It will also reconcile why we have a difference on page 73 in this issue. So I just would appeal again.

I'd make a motion, if it would be allowed, that we table this until following the presentations on Wednesday.

ARTUR STELE: We have already turned down a motion like that.

DOUG BATCHELOR: Can I ask under what conditions you would accept a motion to table this?

ARTUR STELE: If you would like to reconsider something that is suggested as a change, then we could really vote on returning it.

DOUG BATCHELOR: But I am allowed to encourage the body not to vote this change?

ARTUR STELE: Yes, of course.

DOUG BATCHELOR: That's my recommendation.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. The next speaker is Thomas Mueller, microphone 6.

THOMAS MUELLER: Thomas Mueller from Denmark.

Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. The wording already includes "ordained elders." Let me remind the house that ordained elders include both male and female. So the wording already includes the possibility

of female ordained elders performing the communion service. May I kindly request that people opposing women in ministry not use every given opportunity to voice their resistance? On Wednesday we're not rolling back on female pastors. We're not rolling back on female elders.

I stand here in support of the motion.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. We go now to microphone 3, Jeroen Tuinstra.

JEROEN TUINSTRAS: Mr. Chairman, with all due respect to all fellow delegates, I would like to support what was just said. Let's not use every single thing coming from the *Church Manual* to discuss women's ordination. Not everything has got to do with women's ordination.

Please, as he said, we're not rolling back women pastors. They need to be able to conduct these services in church. Even commissioned male pastors need to be able to do these things in church. Please do not make it impossible in some countries to perform these services in church. It's hampering the mission of our church. Please do not use women ordination for everything. Thanks.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. We go now to—

Please don't applaud.

We go now to microphone 3, Anthony MacPherson.

ANTHONY MAC PHERSON: Thank you, Chair.

We seem to be having a problem here at computer station 3, because people register and it doesn't get through to you. You call the vote, and we never get to speak. So we're having real delays here, and it's disadvantaging anyone around microphone 3. So if we could just resolve that problem somehow.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. I would ask again, our technicians, if you could check microphone 3. And for a while, while it is checked, if you could be so kind to move to any other mike that is closer to you before it will be really double-checked. Thank you. Sorry for that.

We go now to microphone 4, David Trim.

DAVID TRIM: Thank you, Brother Chairman.

I hope I can add some clarity to this. At the moment we've heard several people recommend that this be voted down. But actually if this is voted down, all it will mean is that there is no prohibition on deaconesses conducting the communion service. I don't think actually that the people who I've heard saying the motion should be voted down want deaconesses to be able to celebrate communion services. So I think we should look very carefully at this.

At the moment the sense of the whole of the *Church Manual* is quite clear. A commissioned pastor, whether male or female, can celebrate the rites of the church only if they are also an ordained elder. A local ordained elder being commissioned gives them no right to do something in light of being commissioned. So voting this down won't change the right of a commissioned pastor who is an ordained elder to celebrate communion. What it would vote down is the attempt to make it clear that deaconesses, like deacons, are not to celebrate communion. That, I think, is something we can all agree on. And so I hope we can vote it.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. We go to microphone 6, Cecil Perry.

CECIL PERRY: Mr. Chairman, I'm not speaking to any motion, but rather that I have been somewhat sickened by every call being a point of order. In the rules that are given, we have what is known as a question of privilege. And we also have in parliamentary law what is known as a question for information. And I notice that many individuals are using the point of order, which should be used only when there is an infringement of the parliamentary procedure or if something is said that is really out of order and disrespectful.

Therefore, I would suggest that my fellow delegates would also look into their rulebooks. And if they want to have the privilege of—should I say advantage of—cutting a discussion, they can use the question of privilege. And upon that situation, they will have the attention of the chair, instead of every time you hear a question of order, which sometimes is out of order.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. Thank you. Very helpful. Thank you for your attempt to help. It really demonstrates your rich experience. Thank you very much.

We'll go now to the microphone 6, Emmanuel Mwale.

EMMANUEL MWALE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I did mention earlier, before we tend to another discussion, that this issue, as you see it, even if we voted to include “commissioned pastor” in 2010, at this particular time still has a challenge. Because if we have studied it, the positions that have been taken and what is coming to this body on Wednesday, you’re going to discover that what we are discussing now will have implications on the same *Church Manual* that we want to change right now.

So my suggestion is in agreement with others, that if we left this portion for now until after Wednesday, it is going to help this body. Otherwise, we’ll have to get back to the *Church Manual*.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. If it is OK with you, we will interrupt our discussion, and then after another report from the Nominating Committee, we can continue this item.

And I will ask Dr. Wilson to chair.

HOMER TRECARTIN: Mr. Chairman, the Nominating Committee is ready with another report. We have several sections to it. The first section Dr. Pollard, our secretary, will read.

LESLIE POLLARD: Brother Chairman, the first section of our report covers the General Conference vice presidents. I will read their names, and then they will be presented to you as a block of persons who will be serving as general vice presidents of the General Conference.

The first name is that of Dr. Ella Simmons, who comes from the North American Division. We have, as general vice president, being recommended by the Nominating Committee, Dr. Artur Stele from the Inter-European Division. Another name coming from the Nominating Committee, Dr. Geoffrey Mbuana from the East-Central Africa Division. Another name coming as a general vice president recommendation, Dr. Guillermo Biaggi from the South American Division. And then the final—oh. Excuse me. Two more. General Conference general vice president Abner De Los Santos from the Inter-American Division. And then last, General Conference general vice president from the North American Division, Mr. Thomas Lemon.

Brother Chairman, I move these names as general vice presidents of the General Conference.

TED N. C. WILSON: All right. It’s been moved and seconded. And we would like to take this to a vote if that is acceptable.

There's a point of order on microphone 4. Point of order on microphone 4? Stefani McFarland?

STEFANI MC FARLAND: It's Stefani, yes. I respect that this is not the first GC session for a lot of people here. But for many more of us, including myself, it is. And we are laypeople generally, so we don't have much interaction with all of the vice presidents or anybody in the GC. And I was just going to reiterate what another delegate had said: If we could get more information about their names, where they're from, how long they've been in office, we would sure appreciate it.

TED N. C. WILSON: All right. We'll ask the Nominating Committee officials to share a little more with us.

HOMER TRECARTIN: Mr. Chairman, the first name, Ella Simmons, is an incumbent, being recommended to return to office. She is from the North American Division and has served in education and now at the GC for many years.

The second name, Artur Stele, is also an incumbent, being recommended to return to this position of general vice president. He has citizenship in the Inter-European Division, but he was born in what is the Euro-Asia Division territory at this time.

The third one, Geoffrey Mbwana, is also an incumbent, being recommended to return to this position of general vice president. He is from the East-Central Africa Division and has served here at the General Conference for some time as a general vice president.

The fourth one, Guillermo Biaggi, is the president of the Euro-Asia Division. He was, before that, treasurer of the Euro-Asia Division. He is from the South American Division. And that is a new one.

Another new one is Abner De Los Santos, who is a vice president of the Inter-American Division. He was before that a president of the North Mexican Union, I believe, in the Inter-American Division, and is coming from the Inter-American Division.

The last one, Pastor Tom Lemon, is coming from the North American Division, and he has been president of the Mid-America Union and before that a number of other positions. He chairs a number of different hospital/health system boards and is on some other major committees. So those are the names that have been recommended and the divisions they are coming from.

TED N. C. WILSON: All right. We have two more points of order. Alvin Kibble.

ALVIN KIBBLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

TED N. C. WILSON: Oh. Is that not a point of order? We will listen to Brother Kibble. Where is Brother Kibble? OK.

ALVIN KIBBLE: Mr. Chairman, Alvin Kibble, vice president, North American Division. I rise respectfully to make a statement and an inquiry.

Mr. Chairman, we love our church, and we love our president. But it seems to some of us that the leadership of our church, the protocol of our church, the balance of executive authority in our church, is being restructured before our very eyes.

This reduction that you have presented before us involved the dismissal of two of our most seasoned, valued, and respected vice presidents, Dr. Pardon Mwansa and Dr. Delbert Baker. Just two days ago we evidenced the obvious growth and expansion of our church by the seating of 35 new union territories. In view of the retirement of Elders Lowell Cooper, Armando Miranda, Mike Ryan, and Ben Schoun, I would ask what is the rationale for not incorporating them, these two that have been now displaced from the vice president listing that is being presented at this time? With the reduction that we already experienced through retirement, the additional reduction is a great loss of intellectual experience and history. And I believe that the body would be well served if we could understand the rationale and whether or not replacements will be made once our convention has come to a close.

TED N. C. WILSON: All right. Thank you, Pastor Kibble. Normally we do not take these types of comments when a report comes in from the Nominating Committee. If you have a question, you can certainly speak to the leaders of the Nominating Committee, at which many things were shared and discussed. But I will simply kindly share with you and with this group, and I would humbly ask for your concurrence and for your assistance in the direction that we are attempting to go and for which the Nominating Committee voted, and that is to reduce the number of vice presidents.

I'll give you a little rationale for that, and then we will move on to another item. But we do not discuss names on the floor. If you have a problem, you can speak to the chair and the secretary of the Nominating Committee, and we can make provision for that.

But let me give you a little rationale. We have reduced the number of institutions for which the General Conference is now responsible, in particular, Oakwood University and Pacific Press Publishing Association. They have been transferred or are in the process of being transferred to the North American Division for further enhancement of the mission of that division. In addition to that, the Review and Herald Publishing Association is connected directly with the General Conference, but now in a much different format.

We also have had a number of vice presidents. And I explained to the Nominating Committee that we actually could do with fewer vice presidents in terms of the workload.

So I think I will end the comments at that time, in terms of the rationale. As for the individuals, I will take a little risk, I suppose, in moving further beyond that and saying that in no way are we wishing to denigrate the individuals you have indicated. We had a very fine spirit in the Nominating Committee in terms of at least approaching what was the report and request to the Nominating Committee, although there were individuals who did not agree with that approach. But we had a very sweet spirit.

Those individuals you have mentioned are fine people. They are individuals who can serve God's church, but this is the report that has been brought to the body here for a vote.

So I will go on now with another comment. And we really do not want to take comments about individuals. We will take any comments about the report in the sense that you wish to refer it back or you wish to speak to someone on the Nominating Committee. Marvin Wray, mike 3.

MARVIN WRAY: In respect to the privacy of the delegates here and in respect to trying to maintain the integrity of this General Conference session, I would ask that, on this and all future Nominating Committee reports, we vote by secret ballot. I realize that that could take more time. I still believe that that could be resolved if we implemented the test that was suggested to test the electronic devices by division. I think that could actually speed things up a great deal.

But again, to protect the delegates and to try to protect the integrity of this entire session, I would ask that we vote this and all future nominating reports by secret ballot.

I make that a motion.

TED N. C. WILSON: All right. You've made that as a motion.

Is there a second?

All right.

The motion is to take the voting for Nominating Committee reports by secret ballot, which means a paper ballot. So let us put that to the test here. Are there any who wish to speak to that motion? Otherwise, we will move to actually take a vote. Anyone wishing to speak to that motion?

All right. I don't think we have anyone who is wanting to speak to that.

James Makinde, microphone 1.

JAMES MAKINDE: Brother Chairman, my observation is very direct and to the point. I am wondering exactly what the point is behind our praying and worshipping and doing everything together, and in an assembly as a General Conference session we do not even dare to have the confidence to stand by what we believe?

In the U.S. Congress every constituency has the right to know where their congressmen stand on issues. But when it comes here, we are very proud of saying one thing publicly and voting another thing privately.

Mr. Chairman, I move that, because we are leaders of opinion, because we should be able to stand and be counted for what we believe in or at what we preach, we should be able to be counted. When I vote for something, I want everybody to know that James Makinde voted for something, so that I don't go on to seven people outside contrary to what I did inside. This is what it should take for a Christian and a child of God, the Seventh-day Adventist. Thank you very much.

TED N. C. WILSON: All right. Thank you, Dr. Makinde. Let's try to refrain from applause so that we can keep the decorum appropriately focused.

All right. So you are speaking, I'm taking it, against the motion? All right.

Is there then—let's see. Tony Anobile, microphone 3.

ANTONIO ANOBILE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree with Pastor Wray.

I guess my only question is: Sometimes the reports that come from the Nominating Committee are one or two names because of the need to talk to other people. And while I agree with the need and desire to have a secret-ballot vote, to apply it to every vote moving forward is what I would question. I don't have an amendment or anything like that. But I certainly don't think that every single vote from now on for the Nominating Committee needs to be by secret ballot. And I don't know whether the chair would allow that if, at the time of a report, that is requested it could happen. I'm just trying to see a way to expedite the process, not thinking that every single report from now on needs to be a secret ballot vote. Thank you.

TED N. C. WILSON: All right. Thank you, Tony. Nick Bradley, mike 4.

NICK BRADLEY: I had a question as to the motion on the table to do secret ballot. Several have wanted to try the electronic device by division. And if we're going to secret-ballot vote at that time, why could we not try the device one more time by division while these votes are being counted?

TED N. C. WILSON: The vote was considered and then reconsidered, and I think that's probably where it needs to lie.

NICK BRADLEY: And I understand, but I was actually one that was in line, and the vote went through so fast that there were several that did not get to speak. And according to the *Rules of Order*, would that not make the vote invalid?

TED N. C. WILSON: No, apparently not.

You know, let me just make a little statement about the voting system. I already made a statement. We would have loved to have that work properly. There is no deviousness. There is nothing behind this system not working that we were trying to maneuver. It would have been so easy to have a system that would easily be recorded. But I'm afraid that the integrity of the system is so diminished at this point that I doubt whether anything will bring it back. And the body here has voted already, and they have voted to reconsider. I think we had better just leave it there.

All right, Philip Gai, mike 3.

PHILIP GAI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just concerned about several attempts of getting us back to the electronic system after it has failed to operate on several attempts. I am not a computer guru, but I've spoken to someone who is more knowledgeable and has mentioned to me that it's possible to manipulate this device until the vote leans in one way or another.

It brings me to ask: Is there anything behind this consistent attempt to take us back to the electronic device after it has failed? In fact, I am not even sure that any other secret ballot would be foolproof, or it may also be manipulated.

TED N. C. WILSON: All right. Let's go to mike 6, George Siamuzoka.

GEORGE SIAMUZOKA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

TED N. C. WILSON: Did I skip someone? I'm sorry. Let's go to—excuse me for one moment. Larry Boggess, mike 2, and then George Siamuzoka.

LARRY BOGGESS: Mr. Chairman, I believe in worship this morning we were asked to pray for the Nominating Committee, and I believe we did. And I believe that the Nominating Committee prayed that God would guide them as they processed their work today. I would hope that we as Christians would believe that our prayers work.

And so I today stand here as a sinner saved by God's grace, and I believe that we need to trust God with the recommendations that come through prayer. And because of that, I believe that these names have come bathed in prayer, and we should not oppose what God has done. And so for that reason, I oppose secret ballots for Nominating Committee candidates.

TED N. C. WILSON: All right. Thank you, Larry. George Siamuzoka, mike 6.

GEORGE SIAMUZOKA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also speak here to oppose the motion.

Mr. Chairman, just a while ago this afternoon, we actually voted using the cards, the same in this house. And I don't understand why, at this particular time, we're calling for a secret ballot. It's like, as the previous speaker said, we seem not to trust our own processes. Apart from praying in the Nominating

Committee and in this body, before setting up the Nominating Committee, we prayed, and we have been praying. And so I believe that we need to go ahead, as we have done with previous votes. Thank you.

TED N. C. WILSON: Thank you. All right. Tara VinCross, mike 2.

TARA VIN CROSS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair. I would like to speak in favor of the motion and also in response to someone who has just spoken questioning why we would want something like this. I think it is possible for us to be technically correct and yet fail to hear one another. And from what I understand, our intentions as leaders are to make sure that every voice is heard.

Now, I recognize we are a very diverse church, and the way that we vote for political leaders is very different and, therefore, we would have different expectations of this process, too. But here, when we're casting votes for individuals in government, that is kept private, whereas other decisions that are us representing a body are made more public. So even in that consideration, we should be able to allow for persons to be able to vote their conscience privately.

But to the broader issue, our hope and our desire as leaders is to make sure that every person has a voice and that no one would be intimidated to vote against their will. And in different parts of this world, that is a possibility, even right here. We all know that's possible.

So we want to make sure that every voice has the opportunity to be heard. And that is the intention behind secret ballots.

TED N. C. WILSON: OK. Roger Robertsen, mike 4.

ROGER ROBERTSEN: Mr. Chairman and dear brothers and sisters, we are wasting a lot of time here. There are so many important issues that need to be discussed. The matter of secret ballot is extremely important to many of us, and it could be done efficiently even on paper, because we can continue our discussions here while people are counting. We don't have to waste a lot of time on the process. But what we are wasting time on is the discussion.

TED N. C. WILSON: All right. Kendra Haloviak Valentine, mike 2.

KENDRA HALOVIK VALENTINE: Thank you very much. My concern and my urging of secret ballots comes from something I saw on the floor of the General Conference when I was a teenager.

I was on the floor because I was a family member of GC workers, and I witnessed something that has stayed with me all these years since that General Conference session, I believe it was New Orleans. I witnessed with my own eyes a group of delegates who were told that when their division president raised his card, they were all to vote in unison. And I remember being so shocked as I witnessed that and heartbroken that that's the way the work of my church would be conducted. And I fear that if we do not take seriously a secret-ballot vote, the decisions—the very important decisions that are made at this General Conference session—will have a similar questioning involved with their outcome. This is my concern. Thank you.

TED N. C. WILSON: All right. Thank you. Lee-Roy Chacon at mike 2.

LEE-ROY CHACON: Mr. Chair, I call question on the motion.

TED N. C. WILSON: All right. The question has been called. Is there a second to that?

All right.

We're going to vote now as to whether to cease discussion. All right?

And you're going to use your paper ballot that you're going to wave.

All those in favor of ceasing debate, please raise your card.

Thank you very much.

All those opposed to ceasing debate, raise your cards. [The motion to cease debate was voted.]

All right. We are now back to the motion. I'm going to have the secretary repeat the motion to us at this time.

LESLIE POLLARD: The motion recommends to this body—

TED N. C. WILSON: No. This motion here. The motion has to with using a secret paper ballot for all reports from the Nominating Committee, but let's hear the actual wording.

ALEXANDER BRYANT: Mr. Chairman, the motion reads that we would use a secret ballot for all Nominating Committee reports brought to the floor.

TED N. C. WILSON: All right. I hope that is clear to you. We're going to ask now those who are in favor of that motion, please raise your cards. All right.

Those who are opposed to that.

The motion does not pass.

All right. We are back to the report from the Nominating Committee. I would ask that you keep your remarks as brief as you can so that we can proceed.

Gina Brown, mike 4.

GINA BROWN: Thank you so much. I'm asking that the report be referred back to the Nominating Committee based on the fact that I appreciate our church working efficiently and effectively, and I also appreciate the fact that we're using fewer vice presidents, but I have noted that we've displaced two and we've added two. So for that reason, I'm asking that the report be referred back to the committee.

TED N. C. WILSON: I'm going to rule that if you have a particular reason that you wish to speak to the leadership of the Nominating Committee, you can do that, Gina. I would ask that you do that, and we will wait until that takes place.

If there's anyone else on that list who has a question that they would like to pose to the Nominating Committee leadership, I would invite you to come backstage and to speak to that. Anyone who would like to do that, you are welcome to do that at this time.

We're going to call Artur Stele—I don't know where he is—to come back, and we will continue with *Church Manual* activity until we get a report from the leadership of the Nominating Committee.

ARTUR STELE: Now we are back to our beloved *Church Manual*. And we have several speakers who would like to speak to the motion. Sorry that we had to interrupt it. And there is a point of order. I hope it is a point of order. Microphone 6, Mbulelo Nqumse.

MBULELO NQUMSE: Thank you, Pastor Chair. I am quite confused now. We were standing at these mikes before the president left the chair.

ARTUR STELE: So it is not to the issue of the *Church Manual*?

MBULELO NQUMSE: No, no, no. It is concerning issues that relate to the report.

ARTUR STELE: OK. So now, since there is a meeting of the Nominating Committee chair and the secretary, we have stopped the discussion of it. But your names are kept, and when the issue comes back, then you will be given the chance to speak.

Now we are going back to the issue of the *Church Manual*. Those who were in line to speak to the *Church Manual*, if you can come back, here it is. Thank you. Now we have the right list. Sorry. I was really using the wrong list.

We have, at microphone 2, Daniel Stojanovic.

DANIEL STOJANOVIC: Mr. Chairman, I think that almost I forget what I wanted to say.

I think that we do so many things about simple wording suggested by the *Church Manual* Committee. From my understanding, by definition, “commissioned minister” is always one who is ordained as a church elder. It’s not possible to go away of this requirement. By definition, the commissioned minister will exist even after the discussion on ordination, because we already have male and female commissioned ministers.

So if it is true, therefore, we can vote right now without waiting for the discussion on ordination, because this question has nothing to do with the discussion of ordination of women.

A commissioned minister has to be ordained. If not, that person is not a commissioned minister, according to our *Working Policy*.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. Thank you very much. Now we go to the microphone number 2, Jay Gallimore.

JAY GALLIMORE: Yes, Brother Chairman. I want to come back. I do not believe that this is a Wednesday issue. Commissioned ministers can be either male or female. The issue is whether you can have a commissioned minister who is unordained as a local elder acting or overseeing the sacred service of communion, and all we’re asking is for that language to be cleared up. Therefore, I move to recommend this back to the *Church Manual* Committee to clarify that language for us.

ARTUR STELE: All right. Is there a second?

Yes, I see a second.

It's debatable. Now we are speaking to this referral. Those who speak at the mikes, who are listed to speak, if you are not speaking to the referral, then I'm asking probably to vote. Those in favor to be referred back—

I see there is a person who wants to talk to it, microphone 2, Larry Boggess.

LARRY BOGGESS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I support this motion.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. There is a point of order, microphone 2, Luis Torres.

LUIS TORRES: Mr. Chairman, twice a motion has been made to table. And according to our *Rules of Order*, it's a subsidiary motion. And I question whether or not the chair has the prerogative to deny a subsidiary motion to table.

ARTUR STELE: Previous motions have not dealt directly with suggested changes. The last one was a request to bring an alliance referring to the changes. I consulted with the chair and the secretary, and they felt they could work on it. And this why I have accepted it, and now we are discussing it.

OK. Microphone 4, Natasha Nebblett.

NATASHA NEBBLETT: I would just say, Mr. Chair, that considering the amount of conversation that has happened and that we have still not come to consensus, I would really speak in favor of referring it back, just to clarify for this group.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. Thank you, Natasha. I see there is one—that's it. Now we are ready to vote. We are voting the referral.

If you support to refer it back, then please show it by raising your card now.

Thank you.

If you are against, show it now.

Well, the referral is lost.

OK. We are back to the main motion, and we have at microphone 5 Clinton Wahlen.

CLINTON WAHLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to go back to page 7 of the *Rules of Order* on subsidiary motions. I don't see a reason that motion to table should be disallowed. I think there is a connection with the discussion that's later to come. But even if there weren't, there's no language

here that indicates to me that a reason needs to be given, except that we would like to look at it at a later time. So I'm wondering if I could make that motion to table this item until Wednesday.

ARTUR STELE: We just now had a motion on referrals. That's why I think it's in the same line and the body has already expressed, and you cannot reconsider the motion to table.

CLINTON WAHLEN: OK. Then my other suggestion would be that since, really, the problematic word is "commissioned," I would like to move that we amend this motion to strike the word "commissioned."

ARTUR STELE: OK. Is there a second?

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Brother Chairman?

ARTUR STELE: Yes, please.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: If we are consistent with the current *Church Manual*, it seems to me that we are not doing nothing out of order. Because the problem is that some people are just trying to trying to see here something related to the discussion that will come on Wednesday. It's not the intention of that, because already we have the word "commissioned" as part of the current *Church Manual*. It was approved, and it's not only women who are commissioned; there are men who are commissioned. So we need to be careful not to try to see things that are not really there or in the *Church Manual*. We currently have the word "commissioned," and it's approved.

ARTUR STELE: All right. So thank you for this clarification.

It was moved an amendment, and I am getting a message that several have seconded it. Now, if you would like to talk to the amendment, we have the opportunity now.

We have a point of order, microphone 3, Kenneth Vogel.

KENNETH VOGEL: Sorry, Mr. Chair. I'm sorry to put a point of order. But I understand an amendment requires just a modification, in that what is being presented to us by the *Church Manual* Committee is the intent of the actual motion. I cannot see how this can be accepted as an amendment.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. Let me ask advice here.

I get the message that it was in order.

There is another point of order on the microphone 2, John Brunt.

JOHN BRUNT: My point of order is that it seems to me that this motion is not in order because we have already been told that to change the *Church Manual* as it currently exists takes a process of moving through the committee over a five-year period. And this would be a change in the manual as it already exists, not an amendment to the proposed change to the manual.

ARTUR STELE: The difference is that what we are discussing now is what was already presented to the body. It's not a new item. If it would be a new item, then your suggestion would be in order.

We have Jim Howard at microphone 2.

JIM HOWARD: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think what I need to understand is how to vote on the recommendation to make a change or an amendment. I've heard a couple people mention that a commissioned pastor has to be ordained as a local elder. Can you show us that in the *Church Manual*? If that's true, then that settles the issue. It's not a male/female issue. It's just a matter of whether or not a commissioned pastor goes through that process. I've had pastoral interns working with me as associates, and I've had to make sure that they are ordained as local elders before they can conduct the communion service.

That's how I understand it. David Trim says he's done a detailed study, and that's how it is in the church. So if that's really how it is, I think the matter could be settled if you could just show us in the *Church Manual* where it is clear that a commissioned pastor must be an ordained local elder.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. Please.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: On page 73 of the current *Church Manual*, at the end, referring to marriage ceremonies, it says, "In a marriage ceremony the charges, vows, and declaration of marriage are given only by an ordained pastor except in those areas where divisions committees have approved that selected licensed or commissioned pastors who have been ordained as local elders may perform the ceremony."

JIM HOWARD: OK. That's pertaining to marriage, but it's not saying that commissioned pastors have been ordained elders. Is that correct? I mean, if they're going to conduct a marriage, they have to. But is there somewhere where it suggests that that's related to the communion services? There doesn't appear to be anything that is a blanket statement for commissioned pastors, nor does there seem to be a specific suggestion in the communion section that says that commissioned pastors must be ordained as local elders.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. We will ask our secretary to respond.

ALEXANDER BRYANT: It's found in policy L-2605. It's not in the *Church Manual*. It is in our policy in connection to the requirement for all of the credentials that the Seventh-day Adventist Church issues.

JIM HOWARD: OK. So my recommendation is that it needs to be in the *Church Manual* somewhere.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. Thank you. We move to microphone 5, Lowell Cooper.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Brother Chairman, it's a good suggestion. It seems to me that if it appears in the policy in regard to commission, then it's important to include it in the *Church Manual*. It's a good clarification.

ARTUR STELE: OK. Lowell Cooper.

LOWELL COOPER: Thank you, Brother Chairman. I would speak against the amendment because it restores dissonance in the *Church Manual* with other places where ordained/commissioned pastor language is used. But I think the problem or the question that is lying behind this can be resolved, at least in this particular instance, with a very slight change in language where a communion service could be conducted by an ordained minister or a commissioned minister who is ordained as a local elder, comma, or a local elder.

I think it solves the question that has been raised because it is correct that there are people who may have commissioned-minister credentials but who are not functioning in a local church capacity and, therefore, by the questions that have been raised, would not be entitled to conduct a communion service.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. OK. Now we are ready to vote. We are voting on the amendment.

If you are in favor of the amendment, please raise your cards now. Thank you.

All right. Those who are against, show it by the same sign. Against the amendment.

What is the amendment? OK. Let us come to the amendment. The amendment is to strike the word “commissioned.”

So those who are in favor, please show it by raising your cards.

Thank you.

Those who are against, show it by raising your cards.

The amendment has failed. Thank you very much. We are back to the main motion.

There is a point of order at microphone 4, Mario Veloso.

MARIO VELOSO: Brother Chairman, thank you anyway, but it is already voted. It doesn't make any difference to say anything. Thank you.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. Now we go to the microphone 2, Ronald Brise.

RONALD BRISE: Good afternoon, Brother Chairman. It's my pleasure to address the body this afternoon.

There are many who have requested that this issue be referred back to the committee for reconsideration. I think our church needs to be inclusive and not exclusive. And as I listened to the discussion a little bit earlier concerning membership, it seems that there's a trend or a tendency to want to be exclusive. And I think if we move forward with not adopting the language the way it's currently stated, we will continue with that trend.

So it is my purpose to support the language as it's stated, recognizing that in the language it refers to “commissioned,” which refers to language that is in the *Church Manual* on page 73.

So it's important for us, as we consider this, that the language that we will vote on Wednesday will take precedent over any of this. So those who are concerned about that should recognize that

whatever the outcome of the vote on Wednesday, it has precedence and will have precedence over the language that currently stands in the manual, because it will be applicable based upon that vote.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. We go to microphone 2, Julie Keymer.

JULIE KEYMER: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to call question on the motion.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much.

Is there a second?

It is seconded.

Those who are in favor, please raise your yellow cards.

Thank you.

Those who are against, raise your cards now.

It passes.

And now we will vote on the main motion. I will ask someone to prepare to read the main motion. But before you do that, we have a point of order, microphone 3, Kevin Rhamie.

KEVIN RHAMIE: Yes. Mr. Chair, we have a serious problem on station 3. We've asked you to address it at least three times. When someone stands at this mike, you call for the vote and our name is not registered.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much.

KEVIN RHAMIE: If we go to another mike, that won't be enough time. This is the third time. If this continues, there seems to be a conspiracy that the people in this section are not being heard. Please fix this.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much. I will ask the technicians again: If you could please double-check what is going on with microphone 3.

And, as I said, till it is fixed, please try to use another mike that is closer to you.

OK. We are now ready to vote on the main motion. Please, if Brother Secretary could read the main motion, we will vote on it.

HARALD WOLLAN: The main motion as it is in your document says from line 13, “Who May Conduct the Communion Service—The communion service is to be conducted by an ordained/commissioned pastor or an ordained elder. Deacons or deaconesses are not permitted to conduct a service.”

ARTUR STELE: All right. Now we are voting on this motion.

Those who are in favor of this motion, please show it by raising your yellow cards or green cards.

Thank you. Thank you.

Those who are against, use the same sign.

Thank you. The motion carries.

All right. Let's move on to another item.

HARALD WOLLAN: Mr. Chairman, I hope number 412 can be easily addressed. It deals with church leaders where they are not ordained as church elders. From line 13 it reads, “The leader must either conduct the church service or arrange for someone else to do so. If the church leader is unable to lead out in the business meeting, the conference should be contacted for assistance.”

And then on line 17: “A leader, who is not an ordained elder, may not administer a baptism, conduct a Lord's Supper, perform the marriage ceremony, or preside at business meetings when members are disciplined.”

I move this.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. It's been moved.

Is there a second?

There is a second.

Are there any at the mikes? I see there is, at microphone 6, Daniel Duda.

DANIEL DUDA: Sorry, Mr. Chairman. That was a question on information. It's not related to this item.

ARTUR STELE: OK. Then, since no one is at the mikes, is there no one at microphone 3 waiting? No.

Then I will ask you to vote. Those who are in favor, please raise your cards. Show it by raising your cards.

Thank you. Thank you.

Those who are opposed, show it by the same sign.

Thank you. It is carried.

Next item.

DANIEL DUDA: Mr. Chairman?

ARTUR STELE: Yes.

DANIEL DUDA: The chair on Friday promised that on Sunday we would have the report from the Steering Committee regarding the two-thirds required majority for fundamental beliefs. Now it's 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, and I still haven't heard the answer.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you very much.

The plan is that because of some time constraints and because of some of the members of the Steering Committee who were running a marathon this morning, we had to start a little bit later, and we were not able to address this issue. But we have decided that it will be done tomorrow morning at the Steering Committee. So if you will be patient enough and forgive us that we have not met the deadline, tomorrow it will be addressed. Thank you very much.

Let's move to the next item.

HARALD WOLLAN: Mr. Chairman, Item 413 deals with deacons. And the issue that is addressed on lines 32 to 43 is actually who is responsible for training the deacons. And we are suggesting the following. I'm reading from line 41: "The Ministerial Association of the conference, in connection with the departments, promotes the training and equipment of deacons. However, the pastor, in conjunction with the elder(s), has the primary responsibility for training the deacons." And then there is a reference to notes.

And on the next page we are underlining again that deacons are not authorized to preside at the Lord's Supper or baptism. I move this.

“If a church has no one authorized to perform such duties, the church leader shall contact the conference for assistance.”

Then we go to lines 19 and 20. And it deals with the communion service: “At the service of foot washing, the deacons and deaconesses provide everything needed, such as towels, basins, water, and buckets.”

I'd like to move this.

ARTUR STELE: It is moved.

Is there a second?

It has been seconded.

I see, at microphone 6, Samuel Davis.

SAMUEL DAVIS: Brother Chair, I think we're all waiting for the report of the vice presidents to come back to us, but we're well over time. Can I call for a motion to adjourn? We don't know how long they will be in the back making their points. So can I suggest that because we are over time, we call for a motion to adjourn?

ARTUR STELE: For that one we need a second, and it is not debatable.

I see a second.

Now we are going to vote. If you are supporting to adjourn, then I would ask you to show it by raising the card.

Thank you.

Opposed, the same sign.

OK. I have advice here that it's passed by a small margin. OK. Then we will ask for a prayer of benediction. Reuben Abreo from the Inter-European Division has a concluding prayer.

REUBEN ABREO: I invite you to pray in French with a very charming Portuguese accent. Please stand.

[Prayer.]

ARTUR STELE: Now you can return your devices. I hope people will be ready to gather them.
And have a good dinner, and we await you back for the program itself.

[End of afternoon session.]