

FIRST BUSINESS MEETING

Sixty-First General Conference Session, June 6, 2022, 10:00 a.m.

ARTUR A STELE: Welcome to the sixty-first General Conference Session here in St Louis, Missouri. We've come from east, west, north, and south, and have arrived in St Louis, Missouri for this meeting. Please let us find our seats, and we will start our business session. We will give you a minute to find your seats so that we can come to order and start our work. It's such a joy finally to see each other and we understand that you like to welcome and greet each other, but let's come together, start the work, and you will have plenty of time to speak and rejoice with each other, enjoy each other. I would tell those who are standing they might not get lunch today, so if you want to have lunch on time, please take your seat. Then we can guarantee your lunch on time. If not, you might miss it. Thank you. Thank you. I see people are moving in the right direction. Unfortunately, some are already going to the cafeteria. Don't worry, it's closed.

Alright, I think we can start. Welcome dear delegates, those who are here in the dome but also those who have joined us through Zoom to the 61st General Conference Session, and this is the first business session. Welcome. We would like to give glory and honor to God that we can have this session, and we have asked our beloved former treasurer of the General Conference, Elder Bob Lemon to have our opening prayer. Let us stand for prayer.

ROBERT L LEMON: [Opening prayer.]

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much, Elder Lemon, for this heartfelt prayer. We will turn now to our distinguished executive secretary, pastor Erton Kohler, and he will let us know if we can start our session or not.

ERTON C KOHLER: Yes, Pastor Chair, after two postponements because of the COVID-19 pandemic, by God's mercy, we are here for opening procedures of the 61st General Conference Session.

The opening procedures today are in harmony with the General Conference Constitution, Article V, Section 1. All the delegates can see this article on the screen, and I would like to highlight that the General Conference Executive Committee authorized the two postponements of this Session from 2020 to 2021 and from 2021 to 2022. We also followed the requirements of our Constitution and announced this Session in our magazines, *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World*. The official notice appears in the February 2022 online editions, and in the March, April, May, and June 2022 print editions, following the requirement to publish the official notice three consecutive months beginning at least four months before the date for the opening session. The official notice content is available to all delegates on page 23 of the General Conference Session agenda. We also sent letters of invitation for each delegate beginning in October 2021, and the process of registration for the delegates began in September 2021.

The General Conference Constitution also outlines that for the selection of delegates, divisions, in consultation with their unions, should prepare a list of delegates for their division with the criteria found in the Constitution. I can certify that the distribution of regular and at-large delegate quotas to the 13 divisions of the General Conference, the four attached territories of the General Conference, and the 12 General Conference institutions, associations, and services, was done in harmony with Article V, Sections 7 and 8 of the General Conference Constitution.

The process of registration was done in compliance with Article V, Section 9 of the Constitution. That is presented on the screen and requires all delegates to be Seventh-day Adventists in regular standing and that at least 50 percent of the delegates from divisions should be laypersons and non-administrative employees of both genders and representing a range of age groups and nationalities. Before the opening of the Session, I am so glad to announce that 1,876 delegates have registered on site. This number exceeds the requirement of the General Conference Constitution, Article V, Section 3 that is on the screen right now and requires at least one-third of the total delegates must be present at

the opening meeting to constitute a quorum, and once the Session is declared open, the delegates remaining present shall constitute a quorum.

Pastor Chair, because more than one-third of the delegates are present on site today, we are ready for your call to order of the first business meeting of the 61st Session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. I invite you to declare the General Conference Session officially open.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much, Elder Secretary. It's amazing! 1,876 delegates have registered. Praise the Lord! It's a miracle, taking the current situation. Since we have fulfilled all the requirements of the Constitution, I thereby declare the 61st General Conference Session open for business.

Thank you very much. Elder Kohler, please if you can continue guiding us.

ERTON C KOHLER: Okay, Pastor Chair, these sessions and all official Adventist meetings should be based on our Mission Statement. And I would like to remind all our delegates of this biblical foundation that guides us and can be found in Section A of the *Working Policy* that states:

Our Mission— Make disciples of Jesus Christ who live as His loving witnesses and proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel of the Three Angels' Messages in preparation for His soon return.

Our Method—Guided by the Bible and the Holy Spirit, Seventh-day Adventists pursue this mission through Christ-like living, communicating, discipling, teaching, healing, and serving.

Our Vision—In harmony with Bible revelation, Seventh-day Adventists see as the climax of God's plan the restoration of all His creation to full harmony with His perfect will and righteousness.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Elder Kohler. It is so good and so important that we start every meeting of the Church by reminding ourselves of the mission; why we are here. Mission is the heartbeat of this Church. Mission is the only purpose for which we are here. And so, it would be good if before

proceeding we would stop and analyze how we have implemented and fulfilled the mission in the last seven years.

We will start with mission, and we will end with mission. We will now ask our worldwide Church president, Elder Ted Wilson, to give us a presidential address, how in the last seven years we have fulfilled this mission. And we will end the Session on Friday and Sabbath, also giving time to our divisions, departments, and reports on how we accomplished our mission. And so, Elder Wilson, guide us through the presidential address.

TED N C WILSON: Thank you, Pastor Chair and thank you Pastor Kohler for the amazing assembly of this wonderful 61st General Conference Session. And greetings to you, brothers and sisters in Christ. How good it is to be together once again as a world family at a General Conference Session. And this is truly a unique Session as it is the first time the Session has met in a hybrid situation with many delegates here in person, on site, and others joining electronically by Zoom. I would also like to welcome our members and guests with us here in St Louis wherever you are and those who are watching on live streaming. You are so welcome. We're happy that you're here with us.

General Conference Sessions are a very important event in the life of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is here where decisions are made that affect the entire world Church. Delegates and you who are seated here on this vast floor under this dome thank St Louis for its great hospitality. Delegates, your voices, your votes matter. And thankfully, so much of the world Church respects and follows what you vote in the Church. We work in a mutually respectful and collegial, spiritual setting for what is voted. So let me encourage you, as official delegates, whether you are here in person, on site in St Louis, or whether you are connected through Zoom or electronic means, I urge you to participate through voice and vote, those of you who are delegates. You see, it truly matters, and it is a sacred responsibility. Thank you for using ElectionBuddy. It's an interesting name, but it is our voting system, ElectionBuddy.

Thank you for using that when you vote and being diligent to submit your vote electronically, as you participate in the 61st General Conference Session.

Now, since our last General Conference Session in 2015, the world has experienced significant crises and has undergone unprecedented change. As Seventh-day Adventists, this should not surprise us. Prophecy foretells the condition of the world just before Jesus comes. And we are told in the Spirit of Prophecy that the final events will be rapid ones. Yet despite the challenges, we praise God that through His strength, His last-day remnant movement continues moving forward around this globe. We've had to adapt to many different things and circumstances that led to some very difficult decisions, including postponing the General Conference not just once, but twice. Nevertheless, God has blessed in marvelous ways, and we praise Him for the assurance that He will continue guiding His Church through whatever may lie ahead. And let me indicate, I praise God for the beautiful worship, prayer, Bible study session we had to introduce this Session. Now, while it's impossible to report on all the wonderful ways in which God has worked during these past seven years, we will touch on some, in fact, just a few of the highlights. There are many more that could be named, as you, God's people, have answered the call, saying, "I will go and reach the world for Christ!" We give God all the glory for what He has done through each of us and His remnant Church.

Nowhere has dedication to this call been more apparent than in Eastern Europe, where conflict rages in Ukraine, and a massive refugee crisis is flooding neighboring countries. And yet you, God's people, stepped up to the challenge and continued carrying God's work forward despite devastating circumstances. Although displaced from their studios in Kiev, Hope Channel Ukraine continues to courageously produce and broadcast hope-filled, Bible-based programs, despite the danger surrounding them. In Bucha, a town that I visited, now known around the world for horrific scenes, our Adventist center of higher education survived with only minimal damage. The students were evacuated with some going to our Adventist youth camp in western Ukraine where they are helping to care for 97 internally

displaced orphans. ADRA, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, has been very active in helping with this humanitarian crisis, not only in Ukraine but in many of the surrounding countries as refugees fled to safety. Seventh-day Adventist schools and churches provided places of refuge. Some members provided bread and other food items, while others have opened their homes to those in need. What an example for us all, serving others in their greatest time of need. And thank you to those around this world for being the hands and feet of Jesus, as you bring his light and hope to others.

Another way lives are being saved is through many Adventist Mission Life Hope Centers around the world. [A video was shown.]

An integral part of God's ministry to the world is medical missionary work or comprehensive health ministry. [A video was shown].

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has always been based upon God's Word, the Bible. From the beginning we've been a prophetic movement based on the sure word of prophecy. As we followed God's counsel, He has blessed the Church. Based on the Bible, our message and our mission are inseparably linked, and the way we read the Bible, hermeneutics, is vital to our understanding. Recognizing this, a request was made during the 2015 General Conference Session for a specific hermeneutic to be developed for the world Church. This request was entrusted by the Session Steering Committee then to the Biblical Research Institute. In 2020, a book entitled *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Adventist Approach* was released in response to this request. [A video was shown.]

You see, my brothers and sisters, it is really exciting to see that people are already getting a head start on the distribution of this marvelous book, *The Great Controversy*. Just this last Sabbath Nancy, my dear wife, and I had the privilege of participating with the St Louis West County Church in sharing *The Great Controversy* with their community, and just yesterday we welcomed eight "I Will Go" bicyclists, cyclists who on their own initiative on this personal tour, went on a more than 1,000-mile bike ride from Washington, DC to St Louis, distributing *The Great Controversy* and *Your Bible and You* all

along the way. It's wonderful to see so much enthusiasm growing. And this morning I'd like to introduce you to Jerry DuVall, Pastor of the Kimberling City and NIXA Seventh-day Adventist Churches right here in Missouri. Pastor Jerry, thank you for being with us. How did you get involved in distributing *The Great Controversy* in your community?

JERRY DUVALL: Well, after looking for a way to reach out in our community again, how to get evangelism started again, one of our church members said, hey, "I know a guy by the name of Oleg, if you know who he is, who said let's go do *The Great Controversy*," and the next thing you know the church voted on it. We began to move really slow and ordered 1,408 books. Oleg came down and did a presentation and we went out and we actually put those 1,400 books out in less than three hours.

TED N C WILSON: So, your members were really involved with this?

JERRY DUVALL: They were.

TED N C WILSON: And they were supportive?

JERRY DUVALL: They were very supportive.

TED N C WILSON: What would you say to pastors, church leaders, and members around the world about participating in a project and distributing *The Great Controversy*?

JERRY DUVALL: Well, first thing is a church that does nothing can expect nothing. All you've got to do is begin. This is a great starting point for evangelism. You get that book out; you begin to see things in your church. Our church members came back that very day, and they were so excited. We have a mix, we have Ukrainian and English mix, and they were afraid of their English skills. They got out there and began to talk with their community even though they spoke broken English and they come back so excited. They were able to share and touch lives. A lot of them took Bibles back to people that had no Bibles. They really got excited, and that excitement not only happened there but it began to spread throughout our church and throughout this entire year. That day they voted to do more books. So, we had an ongoing book supply to our community, and we continued that again this year.

But one of the things is, it's become so infectious, the books that you delivered last week, those were our church members that delivered those books from Indiana to here. So they could deliver those, they gave their trucks and their time. Two members used their trucks to get those books here. So, it is contagious, and once you see that in your churches, it is a wonderful thing because your church begins to bloom in ways that you probably don't see right now but God will use it in a great way.

TED N C WILSON: Praise God, Jerry Duvall, for this enthusiastic report! I'm enthused just listening to you. God bless you in a special way and the churches. Give them our special thanks. We will see people in heaven because of this.

JERRY DUVALL: Amen.

TED N C WILSON: God bless you.

SPEAKER: God bless you.

[A video was shown.]

TED N C WILSON: We praise God for the many creative ways He has led His Church to continue carrying His mission forward through various channels. Technology has also paved the way for millions of people to access the writings of Ellen G. White through websites and apps. Since 2015, the number of users has grown tremendously with the Ellen White websites and apps averaging 7.5 million visitors every month, representing users from almost every nation on earth. In addition, the White Estate averaged 225 million search requests and 24 million download requests for books, e-books, or audio books per month. That represents more than 2.48 billion search requests and 273 million download requests just during 2021. We praise God for the tremendous way He is blessing these inspired writings! We are also thankful for the work of the General Conference's Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, including the electronic Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists. This new work contains more than 3,000 articles and 7,000 photographs featuring Adventist missionaries, evangelists, institutions, events, and beliefs and is constantly growing.

Education has always been an important part of the Adventist experience, and we praise God for the blueprint He has given to us and the encouragement the General Conference Education Department gives in following that blueprint. We applaud our teachers and students around the world who have persevered through these especially challenging times, when COVID restrictions required quick adaptability to new learning methods. We thank God for each one of our 85,000 teachers and the 1.5 million students who are attending 7,500 schools in nearly 150 countries, including our General Conference educational institutions—The Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies in the Philippines; the Adventist University of Africa in Kenya; and Andrews University and Loma Linda University Health in the United States. [A video was shown.]

As Seventh-day Adventists, we are blessed to have a very active Church as well as significant assets and institutions. God calls us to care for the property He has entrusted to us, and we are blessed to have Adventist Risk Management, an important ministry of safety and caring through insurance and risk management solutions. We're particularly grateful for this ministry, especially during the coronavirus pandemic crisis.

Ministering in the public arena is a very important aspect of our calling as Seventh-day Adventists. The Public Affairs and Religious Liberty department is the official liaison of the Church with public offices. It assists in equipping Adventist leaders and members to present Church identity, message, and mission to people of influence, as well as to every member of society. During the past seven years, an important focus for PARL has been on mediation on behalf of imprisoned brothers and sisters around the world. We invite the global Church to pray for our imprisoned members and their families.

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries is another important ministry serving outside Church walls. Its role is to create competent, caring, committed Adventist chaplains to serve wherever their presence is

needed, including law enforcement, military, health care, educational campuses, communities, and prisons. During the past seven years, ACM, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, established worldwide standards of professional chaplaincy certification, including the use of on-site training and online courses. We appreciate the work of this vital and important ministry. [A video was shown.]

Now, closely related to the Stewardship department is the Planned Giving and Trust Services department that reminds us that good stewardship doesn't end at death. Planned Giving encourages all Seventh-day Adventists to have a plan that will provide for their families' needs and support the mission of the Church to reach the world for Christ. Gifts received by Planned Giving and Trust Services have fueled missions around the world in a tremendous way.

We also praise God for the ministry of GCAS, the General Conference Auditing Service. Their important work helps to ensure that the funds entrusted to God's Church are used appropriately for their intended purposes.

Now, in our spiritual journey, God invites us to come to Him for revival and reformation just as we did this morning in our worship. And, during the past quinquennium, we have continued this important initiative encouraging every member to seek this invitation on a personal level, praying for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Under the Holy Spirit's guidance, the Revival and Reformation Committee has ignited the hearts of God's people around the world as thousands have been participating in reading God's Word one chapter at a time through Revived by His Word and Believe His Prophets, praying together as a worldwide Church family and pleading for the outpouring of the latter rain of the Holy Spirit. Under the direction of the General Conference Ministerial Association and the Revival and Reformation Committee, members around the world have been united in prayer through the Ten Days of Prayer initiative, the Quarterly Days of Prayer, the 40 Days of Prayer, the 100 Days of

Prayer, and 24/7 United Prayer. Now, for the next few moments, and this is an interesting video, watch as God has used people and is using them in unique ways through united prayer. [A video was shown.]

Each quinquennium, the world Church develops a new strategic focus, and during the 2019 Annual Council a focus for 2020 to 2025 was voted: "Reach the World, I Will Go." The "I Will Go" theme originally developed by evangelistically minded young people in South America, was quickly adopted by young and old alike as a very exciting strategic focus that encourages total member involvement, with everyone having the opportunity to say, "Yes, I will go." Now, this strategic focus founded on extensive research has been widely embraced as Seventh-day Adventists are heeding God's call saying, "Yes, Lord, I will go." One young woman who heeded the call was Melissa De Paiva Gibson who allowed God to work through her in an amazing way, offering forgiveness and reconciliation, despite the horrific circumstances. [A video was shown.]

Through her forgiveness and allowing the story to be told through this powerful film, Melissa is answering God's call to go and reach a hurting world for Jesus Christ. [A video was shown.]

God's work of evangelism is ongoing around the globe, especially during this recent pandemic. Thank you for what so many of you have done and are doing to share God's precious biblical message in personal and public evangelism. [A video was shown.]

My brothers and sisters around the world and fellow leaders assembled here in St Louis, by God's grace, be involved in personal and public evangelistic outreach as we come to the end of earth's history. There will not only be souls in heaven because of God working through you, you will also be spiritually blessed as you review our wonderful biblical truths all focused on Christ. I know I am refreshed every time I preach those messages. Now, let me share what took place in the Philippines with former rebels in Mindoro, an island, another amazing story of forgiveness and reconciliation. [A video was shown.]

Here with us today, by way of video connection, are two of the fully reconciled rebel leaders. I had the privilege of baptizing their former rebel general. And Pastor Duane McKey who will be assisting today in the baptism of Adventist World Radio, will baptize the wife of this former rebel general. It was just a few months ago in Mindoro that this took place. Also, with me on the platform is Pastor Robert Dulay, who is Philippines' AWR Coordinator and who will be assisting us with a short interview with these former rebels. Now today, in their presence, in the presence of these former rebel individuals who are now fully reconciled, they will also be able to view and see the distinct privilege of a baptism, and I want to introduce to you the Philippine Army Colonel, Eric Guevara. Colonel Guevara is the second in command in the Philippines Army regiment that is overseeing the transitional operations dealing with the former NPA rebels. And because of what he and his wife have seen and what they have studied in God's Word with Pastor Robert Dulay of AWR Philippines, they have decided to dedicate their lives fully to the Lord in baptism, and today, join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Colonel and Mrs. Guevara, we welcome you. What a story of forgiveness and reconciliation, as we prepare for the very end of time in earth's final countdown and the coming, the soon coming of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Now, I want to pass the microphone to Pastor Dulay, and Pastor Dulay is going to be asking questions of our former rebel leaders who are now fully reconciled in Jesus Christ by way of Zoom to the Philippines, and we are carefully securing their identity. We do not want in any way to jeopardize their personal identity and personal freedom. Pastor Dulay, ask these wonderful new believers through Zoom, as we connect with them in the Philippines, how God has changed their lives and what they feel in their hearts right now. Please, Pastor Dulay. [Interview in foreign language.]

PASTOR ROBERT DULAY: For 18 years she was serving in the rebel movement, and she didn't have peace, and her life was a mess, and she was away from the family. But when she heard God's message through the ministry of Adventist World Radio in the Island of Mindoro, and through the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, she found peace and now she's serving as our AWR

missionary reaching the Island of Mindoro and preparing these people for the soon coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is the result of the overwhelming impact of the ministry of Adventist World Radio on the whole Island of Mindoro, transforming the lives of people, even the lives of these rebel people.

TED N C WILSON: What a blessing to see what the Holy Spirit does in the lives of people when God touches their hearts. And now, Colonel and Mrs. Guevara, let me just ask you a question before your baptism. You're part of the Philippine military. You have been watching what has happened in the lives of these former rebels, you have been so impressed, you have been studying God's Word, and something has happened to your life. Tell me, Colonel, what is it that has changed your life?

COLONEL GUEVARA: It was during the course of our interaction with the former rebels, where we saw how God moved and worked to transform these individuals to fully restored individuals. And one day, the Holy Spirit descended upon us through the teachings of Pastor Dulay, and it is where we opened our hearts and accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

TED N C WILSON: Powerful! Powerful! And Leah, could I just ask, what do you feel in your heart right now? Are you excited or happy? [Interview in foreign language.]

PASTOR ROBERT DULAY: So, she said the Lord brought us here for a purpose, and I am feeling nervous, but I'm happy that we are here in front of you.

TED N C WILSON: Now, it is my happy privilege and that of Pastor Duane McKey of Adventist World Radio, to proceed with you into this baptistry and to see a new life come from out of the water because the Holy Spirit has done something in your heart. Let's proceed into the baptistry. What a great privilege it is to be part of God's Advent Movement, a movement stretching across the entire globe, a movement not born of human beings, not originating in a committee, not something conjured up by some imaginative person, but a movement born of heaven, coming from the very throne room of God.

What a privilege to see that the Holy Spirit wishes to use every single one of us in Total Member Involvement, saying, "Yes, Lord, I will go. I will be part of Your last-day message to an earth that is crying for God's precious love." Now, as we see these lives of Colonel Eric Guevara, his precious wife, Leah Guevara, changed through the power of the Holy Spirit, may it inspire all of you and each one of us to be part of this last-day movement, for certainly Jesus is coming soon.

So now, Colonel Guevara and Sister Leah, Pastor McKey and I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

[Back on the platform.] I want to make a special appeal to each of you. Regardless of where you're from, what you're doing, what talents you think God has given to you or talents you don't think you have. God has a place for every one of you. And He wants to use you. Those of you who are watching live stream, maybe there's someone who's not given their hearts completely to the Lord, and maybe this experience has drawn you closer to Him, and you want to say, "Yes, Lord, I want to be part of Your last-day movement. I accept Your redemption, Your saving grace, to be justified and sanctified through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. "I want to be baptized." If you're that person, contact your local Seventh-day Adventist pastor. And to all of us, the privilege of being part of an ongoing movement that allows us to truly fill the earth with the message as our theme here in the General Conference says, "Jesus is coming! Get involved!"

How many of you would like to commit yourself to that great final theme of saying, "Yes, Lord, I'll be part of Your great mission." Would you raise your hand wherever you are? Amen. I would like to ask you to commit that special commitment you have made by kneeling with me in prayer. Those of you here on this floor, we ask you to kneel, if you can. Those in the stands, you can stand. Let us kneel together. [Prayer by Ted N C Wilson.] God will be with you.

ARTUR A STELE: No one and nothing can stop the mission of the Church, the mission of God. The pandemic couldn't do it. Even wars cannot do it. This last Sabbath in Ukraine, 36 new members, new believers, were baptized. One hundred and fifty have been baptized since the beginning of the war. Nothing and no one can stop the mission of God. So, we started this Session emphasizing mission. And by God's grace, we will end this Session by emphasizing mission on Friday and on Sabbath. Thank you, Elder Wilson, and thank you to all of you who have played an active role in fulfilling God's mission. Praise be to God. Now we will turn to our undersecretary, Elder Hensley Mooroooven. He will give us some guidelines and some orientations. So please, Hensley.

HENSLEY M MOOROOOVEN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to this brief orientation of the first ever hybrid GC session. Not only is this a historical moment, but you are part of this history. You were there when it happened. So, I would like your attention for a few minutes as we go through this brief orientation. But Mr. Chairman and esteemed delegates, let me tell you that it was not without much difficulties that we had to organize this hybrid GC Session. But one thing is sure, as we look through the rearview mirror, Mr. Chair, we can acknowledge that God has led us thus far. So, what I'm going to share with you hopefully will help us understand our role a little better. I have one objective in mind as we go through this orientation. We would like to assist General Conference delegates, especially first-time delegates but at the same time we are all first timers in a hybrid GC Session, aren't we? We would like you to understand your role in the business of the Session. And I will touch on briefly three items. This presentation will briefly touch on number one, the ethical expectations of delegates. Number two, I would like to quote an excerpt from the *Church Manual* that will talk about the responsibility of a delegate. And finally, I will end with some practical information to help your experience as an on-site or an online delegate. Mr. Chairman, it might be of interest for us to know that approximately 400 delegates are on Zoom currently. So, if you are ready, I am, too. Let's quickly go through these three parts. Therefore, we will begin.

Your first responsibility when it comes, you are privileged to be a delegate to a General Conference Session. But this privilege comes with some responsibilities, and we'll look at some of them. Responsibility number one. Be informed. What we mean here is that it is the responsibility for the delegate to familiarize himself or herself with the material that Secretariat has shared with you. It is the responsibility of the delegate to listen thoughtfully to all the presentations that are made here, and the reports that are given. Now, if your responsibility is to be informed, our responsibility is to inform you. So, the next two slides are extremely important because they will help us communicate with you. Your responsibility, be informed. Our responsibility, inform you. How do we inform you? You have seen the GC Session website. This is what you see on the website, and you see the address that is there. [GC Session website shown.] And when you click on "Business" and you scroll down, you will find "Session Agenda." And just under "Session Agenda," you will find "Documents." Delegates, this is an important place for you to visit often. When we communicate with you, it will be in the section "Documents." For example, I don't want you to go there now, but there is a list that has been already published there, and we will allude to it in a few minutes. So, please, please, the section under "Agenda" and "Document" is key for you as a delegate. We inform you, you inform yourself, so that when we come here, we can take informed decisions. The same thing applies for the app. You will go on the app, GC Session 2022, to "Business Session" and you will see Agenda and Business. "Business Session" is where we communicate with you. Take time to read, take time to familiarize yourself with documents that are posted there.

It is your responsibility to attend meetings regularly. We are aware that you come here at 8 a.m. and the last meeting ends at 9:15 p.m. But we still encourage you to attend. You have heard that this is a special GC Session where we had to squeeze many things into a small number of days, but please, this is a responsibility.

Maintain confidentiality of privileged information. I will not drill down too much into this, but this is especially important if you're a member of the Nominating Committee. Suffice it to say, parking

lot talk or corridor talk about confidential information, and even pillow talk, is not something that we encourage when it comes to confidential information.

Respect the decision-making process and the decisions that are voted, even if you did not vote with the majority.

Item number two is an excerpt from the *Church Manual* that I will read, Mr. Chairman and esteemed delegates, even if this excerpt from the *Church Manual* is about delegates to a conference session, we believe that it is appropriate for us who are attending this General Conference Session. “Delegates to a conference session are not chosen to represent merely the Church or conference. They should view the work as a whole, remembering their responsibility for the welfare of the worldwide work of the Church. It is not permissible for church or conference delegations to organize or attempt to direct their votes as a unit. Each delegate should be susceptible to the direction of the Holy Spirit and vote according to personal convictions.” *Church Manual*, page 110.

Let me end this orientation with item number three, some practical information to improve your experience whether you are online or on site. Always wear your badge when attending the Session meetings and going for your meals. That's very important because we will use your badge for the electronic system to conduct the business of the Church here.

Further, it is your responsibility to keep your devices—laptops, cell phones—charged. You’ve been given an external battery power bank to help you with enough power for the meetings. Ensure that every evening the battery and all your devices are charged. We do have a charging station at the end of the dome. If you just turn around, you will see a lady with an American flag. This is where the charging station is. You will find several rows of plugs there, and you can go there like in the airport.

And one more thing, protocol to speak if you are on Zoom or if you are on site. Let me begin with those who are on site first. In your agenda packet, page seven, is a pink page on how to approach

the chair. You approach the attendant at the nearest microphone station. You wait for the attendant to tell you when to speak. You give the attendant your badge. The attendant will keep it until the time you leave. You may speak when the chair acknowledges you, and when you finish speaking, you can retrieve your badge.

For our Zoom participants, you request to speak using the virtual hand raised. The Zoom coordinator will talk to you. There will be a conversation. Continue to talk with your coordinator. And when the chair acknowledges you, they know at the back what to do. Delegates have been provided with Wi-Fi access. This is only for your use as a delegate to vote and to receive materials, so please refrain from doing other things with this internet connection. And please log in with only one device, the device that you will use to vote and to conduct the other aspects of business.

PETER LANDLESS: Thank you so much, Brother Hensley. What a privilege to be here. This is a wonderful occasion. It is actually a family reunion. It took me one-and-a-half hours to get from the Marriott to registration. Why? I didn't get lost. But I was found by so many of you. What a pleasure and a joy. And thank you for being here, for being conscious that we are still in the midst of COVID. Also, your health, your well-being in every way, is our major concern. Please remain hydrated, take the necessary walks and exercise that you should be doing. And for emergencies, near the cafeteria between registration and where we eat, there is a place called First Aid Plaza. This is attended by EMTs, emergency medical technicians, who are there to help you if you have a health problem.

Now, when it comes to COVID suspicion, if you feel that you are not well, that you have a temperature, a bit of a runny nose, it feels like you have a cold, a cough, muscle pain, please stay away from this convocation. We are supplying at-home tests and personal tests that can be picked up in Room 113 from Pam Ingram-Clay, our GC nurse. We are hoping that there will not be a huge demand, but they are there. And please also contact, as per the instructions in the GC Session app and on

GCSession.org website, your health coordinator and the executive secretary of your division. And if you have a positive test result, those two together with our nurse and others, will advise on further steps.

You received in your bags one of these masks to be used at your discretion. We are following the jurisdiction rules of the territory in which we are. It's not mandated, and we chose not to mandate mask wearing. We would ask you to use them as you choose. I use them what I call facultatively, particularly when I'm with people, a lot of people. Also hugging is inevitable. But just check it out with the person you're going to hug that it's alright with them, too. It's the way to go. It's difficult to distance. There's hand sanitizer placed all around the area. Please use it. We're not through the pandemic yet. We would like you to remember all of these things carefully. Our prayer is that you will "prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers." May the Lord bless you richly as together we care for each other's safety, our own, and also that we prevent being labeled as a super spreader, except to be super spreaders of God's Word and salvation.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Peter.

HENSLEY M MOOROVEN: Calibration, Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR A STELE: We will try now to have some calibration votes. And then we will proceed.

[Calibration vote with ElectionBuddy.]

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Hensley, for helping us and technical staff. We will now proceed to a number of items that will help us to organize our Session. So, Elder Kohler. . .

ERTON C KOHLER: Thank you. We have some final procedures to our opening ceremony and Pastor Chair to conduct this business in this Session in an orderly manner, I would like to move that we adopt the General Conference *Rules of Order* that each delegate received at registration as a guide for our business meetings.

ARTUR A STELE: Alright. It has been moved and seconded. And if you are comfortable, I say this is our normal way of proceeding, you all got the *Rules of Order*, we can proceed and vote. Here you see the motion. It's in front of you. And we will receive on our devices now the link to vote. [Discussion regarding difficulty connecting to Wi-Fi.]

ARTUR A STELE: And the reason is that many are using several devices. So, we will continue asking our technical staff to try to solve it. In order to organize ourselves, will it be okay with you if we take some actions by common consent? So, if I don't see anyone rejecting or coming to the mic, several items that we always take by vote, we will just take them by common consent, and it will give time to our technicians to solve the Internet issue. Is it okay with you? Thank you very much for helping the Chair.

ARTUR A STELE: Looks like over a thousand people have voted and they have the Internet, but not all. So, let's continue trying to solve the Internet connection, but we will take it by common consent, acceptance of the *Rules of Order*.

ERTON C KOHLER: Okay, Pastor Chair, as a way of ensuring that proper protocol is followed, I move that Todd McFarland of the office of the General Conference Counsel could be appointed as Parliamentarian of this Session. Moved.

SPEAKER: Second.

ARTUR A STELE: Moved and seconded.

[Continued discussion regarding difficulty connecting to Wi-Fi.]

ARTUR A STELE: So, it was moved and seconded that we appoint or accept Todd—this is the gentleman on my right—to function as our Parliamentarian. We will take it by common consent if no one objects to it. Todd, welcome. Alright. Let's move on.

ERTON C KOHLER: Okay, Pastor Chair this 61st General Conference Session was organized in the context of a pandemic, and we have only four days of very limited time to accomplish our agenda. Therefore, to give everyone the opportunity to be heard but not have any person or persons dominating the discussion, I would move that we limit speeches to two minutes per speech or three minutes per speech if they are translated.

ARTUR A STELE: And seconded. You know this is a question that requires two thirds majority because it is a limitation of the speech. So, as we will do it by common consent, we need 100 percent support. Are you all comfortable with that? If we give two minutes to speak in English and if someone needs translation, three minutes? Do I see any objections? Well, thank you very much. I probably can declare that 100 percent support this. Let's move on.

ERTON C KOHLER: As previously announced by e-mail, the General Conference Session program and agenda materials are available electronically. Please bear in mind that these materials are intended specifically for the General Conference Session delegates. The Daily Program can be found on page 8. Pastor Chair, I move that we adopt this Daily Program for this General Conference Session.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. It has been moved and seconded as a daily program. Yes, I see someone has come to the microphone. You have registered yourself, so please speak out.

SPEAKER: Yes. I would like to make a motion to the agenda. Talking about the daily schedule. The motion I'd like to make, COVID has really changed a lot of things in our church --

ARTUR A STELE: Sorry, brother, we are now speaking about the Daily Program; when we wake up, when we have lunch and so on. So, it's not the item yet that you are raising.

SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. Alright. I see, can we accept the daily program by common consent? Thank you very much. Then we have done it. Let's move to the next item.

ERTON C KOHLER: Now we'll talk about the agenda. Our agenda is organized in four sections. The general agenda is in items numbered 100 on pages 16 and 17. Constitution and Bylaws agenda is in the items numbered 200 on page 18. Nominations agenda is in items numbered 300 on page 19. Church Manual agenda is in items numbered 400 on pages 20, 21, and 22. Pastor Chair, I move that we adopt the agenda as listed in the General Conference Session materials.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. It has been moved and seconded. Are you comfortable with that? I see we have on microphone number eight Jonathan Zirkle.

JONATHAN ZIRKLE: Thank you. I'd like to make a motion to amend the agenda. I'm sorry. It's difficult to talk with this echo. COVID has caused a lot of problems in our Church, and it's caused a lot of problems for our members. I would like to propose that we discuss the position that the Church has taken on the vaccines, specifically related to statements of 2015 and 2021. Because of these positions that the Church has taken, many people have suffered. I have a document that was signed by 25,000 Seventh-day Adventists in 138 countries, by 1,929 pastors and by 4,164 medical professionals. And they are asking that we reconsider our stance on vaccination. And I would move that this be added to the agenda. I think it is extremely important for bringing our Church together through this time. This has been a very divisive situation. It's been a situation where many people have lost their jobs, their livelihood. Some people have lost their homes. People have lost their custody battles. And a lot of it is due to the fact that they're not able to assert their sincerely religious health beliefs because of the position of the Church. Now, I don't know what the right solution is, but I trust that this body can come to that solution. And I think it's very important that we have a discussion about this.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Brother Jonathan. We really appreciate your concern. But really the General Conference in session deals with items of Constitution and Bylaws, of items that concern our Church Manual or our Fundamental Beliefs, such items that are coming to this level. But the issue of vaccination, we know it is a very divisive issue, and actually the document that was proposed by the Administrative Committee has given a full right for everyone to follow their own conscience. So, there was no push in one or the other direction. And so, we would really plead with you because we have a shortened Session that we don't load our agenda with items that really don't belong there. But we really appreciate your concern.

JONATHAN ZIRKLE: It's what the statement has done. I've represented many people in religious liberty matters, and that statement has been very detrimental. And I would ask that you ask for a second. I would ask for a second.

ARTUR A STELE: So, there is no second. Thank you very much for helping me because—

JONATHAN ZIRKLE: I know that there are people that are online in Canada that are wishing to make a second at this time.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much, dear brother. We have heard you. We have not heard a second, and we will move on. Thank you.

JONATHAN ZIRKLE: I would like to make an appeal of this decision.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Alright. We will -- since there are no more objections, we will accept the agenda and move on.

ERTON C KOHLER: Okay. Let's move for the standing committees. We have three standing committees planned for work during this General Conference Session. They can be found on pages 25 and 26. They are the Steering Committee, the Church Manual Committee, and the Constitution and

Bylaws Committee. The members of these committees are recommended by the General Conference Administrative Committee, the Church Manual Committee, and the Constitution and Bylaws committee with representation from each division have been functioning throughout the past seven years. These two committees will meet during the Session as needed in connection with discussion of agenda items. Pastor Chair, I move that we approve the standing committees as listed on pages 25 and 26 of our agenda for this General Conference Session.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. It has been moved and seconded. I see no one walking to the mics, no objections, and we will accept it by common consent. Let's move to the next item.

ERTON C KOHLER: Pastor Chair, we have now a very, very meaningful moment when I would like to remind everyone that some of our faithful members and workers worldwide have gone to their rest in Jesus during the past seven years, especially during the pandemic. In remembrance of their faithful and dedicated lives, I would like to invite all of you to stand now for a moment of silence reminding each one of them their lives, their legacy, and after this moment of silence, I invite you, Pastor Chair, to close this time with a prayer of thanks for their lives and their ministry in praying for their families, too.

[Prayer by Artur A Stele.]

ERTON C KOHLER: Thank you very much, Pastor Chair. And we now move to accepting into the Sisterhood of Unions the ten new and reorganized unions that have been created during the last quinquennium. This vote makes the unions official members of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists and gives them the right to participate with their delegates in this Session. We are voting them now, so those delegates can immediately fully participate in this Session. You will see the names of these unions listed on the General Agenda from items 111 to 116, and we will more formally recognize and introduce each one of them this afternoon. Pastor Chair, I would like to move the acceptance into

the Sisterhood of Unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church the new and reorganized Union Conference, Union Missions, and Union of Churches Conference.

ARTUR A STELE: Alright. It has been moved and seconded. I see we have number 101. This is probably from the Zoom room. Someone wishes to speak?

GRACE MACKINTOSH: Hello.

ARTUR A STELE: Yes, please.

GRACE MACKINTOSH: Can you hear me? My name is Grace Mackintosh, and there is a request for either in the Session or online for a second to Jonathan Zirkle's motion. And I second.

ARTUR A STELE: Sorry we have a motion on the floor that we are now discussing. We are discussing the accepting into the sisterhood of our churches a number of unions. So, this is now the motion that is in front of us. Thank you very much. Alright, are you ready to accept those unions? I see on Zoom 101, Tobago Mission.

KEN MAPP: My issue and concern is the same issue as before. The Internet challenges have caused the delay in responding to these issues, and I've seconded the motion as well. So, it's a challenge. I'm not sure if you're going to go back to it so we can look at it, but we have a situation where we have been voting by common consensus, and the issue is raised regarding the agenda, and the agenda passed based on common consensus. But a issue was raised which I think it's important that the Church be the one to determine if it's a fundamental issue or fundamental belief. I think it's important that the Church decides that. So, it has been raised, and I think there are many on the floor who would second it and I would like the chair to be fair enough, because I feel as if I'm experiencing a coup attempt, and I don't like that feeling in my Church. I think the Church has a place for the voice of the laity, and the laity is

expressing a position that needs to be listened to, the demands of the Internet and all that, we understand, and we are trying to adapt around it. I am not—

ARTUR A STELE: Sorry, dear brother, sorry, I have to stop you because we are discussing now the motion on the table that is to accept unions into the sisterhood of our fellowship. So, this is the motion, and we are now speaking directly only to this motion. Sorry for that. Okay. Looks like everyone is willing. And joyfully we want to accept these unions into our sisterhood. Let us show our acceptance by standing so that all the unions will really feel accepted. [Applause]

This afternoon we will have each union presented and more information will be given to you, and this will also help you. Elder Kohler?

ERTON C KOHLER: Pastor Chair, I would like to introduce now two unions, and I would like to call your attention for this moment. Two unions that were attached to the General Conference during this quinquennium. They have already been approved by the General Conference Executive Committee, but today I would like to introduce them officially to our worldwide family. Both unions are working very hard under challenging circumstances to move forward and share hope for the people in their territories. I'm referring to the China Union Mission and to the Ukrainian Union Conference. We are so happy to welcome their delegates who represent a special part of our Church family. From China Union, some of our delegates traveled to St Louis and many others are participating online. This is an historical moment for this delegation, because this is the first time in 50 years that they have their delegation according to the number of their membership. From Ukraine we have all the delegates authorized to travel to St Louis. They are here. They left their country and traveled to GC Session, and we are so happy that we have all of them on site for the 61st General Conference Session. And I would like to invite now, all the delegates from Ukraine and from China to stand please, where you are. Stand before all the delegates that are participating in this Session. Those delegates that are present on site, you know that

they also represent all the delegates that are participating online in this Session. We'd like to thank you for your welcome. However, the best thing that we can do now is to pray for them. Please, delegates from Ukraine, and some of them from China, I'd like to ask you again to stand, and I'd like to invite Pastor Ted Wilson, the General Conference President, to come here and pray for both countries, for both unions, and for all our delegates that are on site and those that are online. [Prayer by Ted N C Wilson.]

ERTON C KOHLER: Pastor Chair, now we move to the last portion of our procedural opening, presenting the names of those recommended by the members for the Session Nominating Committee. I would like to invite pastor Hensley Mooroooven, the Undersecretary of the General Conference, to present the composition of this committee.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Thanks Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to report that the 17 caucuses have met, and based on the provision of the Constitution and Bylaws of the GC have submitted the quota of delegates who are to be recommended to serve on the GC Session Nominating Committee. We received all these lists. They have been consolidated now into one single document. And on the screen, as I speak, you should see a list of 268 names because that's the constitutional requirement for the provision for the composition of the Nominating Committee, the 268 names. Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier, if you have some challenges to read what is on the screen, hopefully not, but this document is also on the website under "Documents" and on the app under "documents" as well. So, we will give a few seconds, brother secretary, for our delegates to browse through this list. Thank you.

ERTON C KOHLER: Thank you, Pastor Mooroooven. You have now one or two minutes just to check the names in your app, because we need to move, accept, and vote, the composition of the Nominating Committee. Please take this time, check the names, and help us to move forward on this definition.

ERTON C KOHLER: Now I'd like to move the approval of the composition of the General Conference Session Nominating Committee as presented just now.

ARTUR A STELE: Alright. It has been moved and seconded. For the number of people who wish to speak to the issue of vaccination, I will ask you to please wait until we handle this issue and then I will come back to you. Alright. It has been moved and seconded. Are there any objections, any questions? Because this has been nominated by different groups—unions, divisions, et cetera—a process was already involved in selecting it. Are you comfortable accepting it? I see people saying “yes.” So, we have the motion in front of us. Then we will accept it by common consent. Thank you very much for that.

ARTUR A STELE: And now, there are a number of people who are feeling that I was a little bit too fast. It appears we had a second, so we have Grace Mackintosh, Daniel Gena and Ken Mapp who would like to speak.

GRACE MACKINTOSH: I understand that I'm unmuted. It is a hybrid session and you did ask for a second, and I did text right away, that I would like to second. I just didn't get to the right chat room in time. And I would like to second Jonathan Zirkle's motion. We've had great difficulty in Canada as well because of the way the statements have been worded, because of the way our law is being applied.

ARTUR A STELE: Alright. Since this time, we have had quite a challenge to immediately get all the responses from Zoom. We will provide you a chance and see if the body wishes to come back to this issue or not. We will accept your second as a second.

TODD MACFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, we are working on the Wi-Fi issues. I would like to remind everyone that it is working for the vast majority of delegates. We had over a thousand votes. So, we will continue to work on that. Because of the hybrid nature of this meeting, unless we are going to disenfranchise those online or have it even more cumbersome, we need to get this system working. So,

we're working on it technically, but it is working for large parts of the building, and hopefully it will be working for our folks here on the left.

ARTUR A STELE: Alright. Thank you very much. We will now ask Elder Wilson for a comment.

TED N C WILSON: My dear delegates and friends on site and online, in reference to the issue that has been brought up by a delegate regarding vaccinations, since it has been seconded, it is fair enough for us to vote on that. But I want to strongly urge—and I have the consent and agreement of my fellow officer, Erton Kohler, my other fellow officer, Paul Douglas—that we stand united in asking this body not to put that issue on the agenda for the reasons that have already been enunciated by our chair. First of all, it is not a Constitution and Bylaws item. Secondly, it is not a Church Manual item. Thirdly, it is not a Fundamental Belief item. Now, there may be individuals who will disagree with me and others saying it is my fundamental right to be able to make a choice as to whether or not I wish to receive the vaccination—a vaccination, some vaccination, or not. And the General Conference has very much stood on the position that everyone should make their own decision. The General Conference has made a statement in regard to vaccinations. In fact, I have to tell you that the country that I served in for almost nine years in West Africa, I would not have been able to serve there had I not had a particular vaccination. In fact, there are probably about 15 countries in Africa and perhaps elsewhere where without that single vaccination you would not even be able to enter. So, the debate may contain all kinds of ramifications. It has become particularly acute with the recent COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting vaccinations that were developed, which are not exactly like other vaccinations but are vaccinations. So, it depends on what vaccinations you're talking about as to what responses people give. But the General Conference has not mandated that people take the vaccination. It has given people a choice. So, rather than for us to become embroiled in something which is not an agenda item for a General Conference, it is an administrative item, it has been dealt with. Some people don't like the way it has been dealt with, and that is their right. But rather than for us to become embroiled in something

that is not an item for a General Conference Session discussion, we respectfully, kindly, and very much in a determined manner ask that you, the delegates, vote “no” on placing this item as an agenda item. Thank you. It is in your hands.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Elder Wilson. I see a point of order on microphone number six.

Dave?

DAVID WEIGLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, David Weigley, North American Division. It's not on this issue but rather on the voting situation we have going on right now. Do you want me to hold on that until after you discuss this vote? It does not at all deal with this vaccination discussion.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Dave, if you could wait maybe until after lunch because during lunch many things will be solved with the Internet.

DAVID WEIGLEY: Okay, good, good because I can use my AT&T service, but others cannot use it. You've got to fix it. With 1,000 people getting their vote in when you have 1800 delegates, you've got to find another way. I'll make this speech. You took a vote for bringing the unions in by standing. I hope in the critical votes we stand, if you can't get my IT vote, okay?

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you for helping the chair. I will ask you to stand when we are ready to vote. So dear delegates—okay, I see people on microphone number five, Daniel?

DANIEL JENNAH: Yes. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, still about a point of order. I don't know who is seconding each time that our Elder Kohler was moving a point. If it comes from the chair, I observe that it would be also good if from the floor you could ask somebody just to raise hand to second also the motion, just to give the impression that we are participating in the debate. Because I don't feel comfortable when on your mics, from the pulpit I hear move, and on your right I hear second. So, if we are here just to vote and some people are not in position to vote for electronical issues, we want to help

each other because we are in the same Church. Another point because I still have some seconds, Elder Wilson has made a report which was a beautiful report on mission. And we were all moved by the baptism after the experience in the Philippines. Now, I don't know if we are supposed to, as a world Church, approve this report, to give our support to this report, not only by applauding but to, as usual, ask for a vote to say, we approve the report. With this I ask a question. Is this the only report of the president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists? I would like to raise my hand or to click my vote to say I approve the report of the outgoing president. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Brother Daniel, very much. Number one, to your first item, please help the chair and second it. I will really appreciate it. And let's be very active. Concerning the report that we have heard, those who have attended all of the General Conference Sessions, the president gave a summary of mission activities during the quinquennium in the evening. It was never an item for approval or disapproval. The same is true for all the division reports. So, there is nothing new. We just follow our traditions that we have always had. Alright. We go now to microphone number eight, Armando.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's just in relation to the Nominating Committee suggestion list, is there time to talk about it?

ARTUR A STELE: We have already voted it, Armando.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: I'm sorry. I was out for a moment. Sorry.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. Thank you. We go to Zoom 101. I think you spoke already, right? Okay. Then we go to microphone—okay.

GRACE MACKINTOSH: Hello? Sorry. I had trouble and I was waiting to be unmuted. Thank you for letting me speak again. Just wanted to say that the state seems to think that there are objections of

a religious nature with respect to the COVID-19 vaccines. Also saying in the negative that something that is not religious is still making a religious statement. Here in Canada, although we have protection with respect to individual religious objections, there is a shift to require collective aspect, which is impossible to meet because of the way the statements are worded. And we would have freedom if there had been no statement. That would have allowed freedom of conscience, freedom of religion. I know I have one minute and 15 seconds left, but I really don't have anything more to say. And so that does shift that into the basket of the Session. It is a religious determination that's been made in the statements by saying it's not religious. And it should be something that comes before all the delegates. And if I was more articulate, I would probably be able to say that more eloquently. But I just want to put that before the delegates. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. I go now to microphone number two.

DANIEL STOJANOVICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Daniel Stojanovich from Israel Field. I fully support the remark of Elder Ted Wilson, and my desire to speak comes from the fact that I don't want to see our Church acting and giving the impression that somehow, we don't want to include something important in the agenda. And this is why I would like to just remind everybody that there are procedures on how to discuss the agenda of the General Conference. So, from my understanding, if every delegate comes with just one item and says they would like to include this in the agenda, and we are more than 2,000 delegates, we will spend the summer here, this is not how we proceed. The question is not that we want to close the discussion, but as I understand in so many other domains, we have the opportunity to go through the procedures and then to include it as a body. One person cannot impose the agenda. It is always the committee system that we apply in our Church, and this is what I would like to see today, in unity.

And the second thing is, if some things are Fundamental Beliefs, religious freedom, please, we voted before how to discuss Fundamental Beliefs. If I understand correctly, it takes five years to come to the conclusion, in order to work in unity and to support the divisions, to support unions, and everything else. So please, let's stay together in the agenda that was voted, and not include something that will later become a huge problem for anything else that comes to the mind of our delegates. And I am speaking from the perspective of unity. Thank you so much.

ARTUR A STELE: Alright. By the applause I hear that there is strong support by the delegation not to include the item. But I have to ask you, and there are a number of people who wish to speak, and at 12:30 the doors will open for lunch. So, what do you prefer? Would you like us to somehow express by a vote if we would like to include it or not and go to eat or would you like to spend the time here discussing it more? Vote. Okay. Thank you very much. Then we will proceed to vote. And we will vote by standing. We will ask everyone who is online to vote through ElectionBuddy. Okay. The issue of the Internet is still being solved. So, I will ask everyone who is here if you would like to include, if you support the amendment, then I would like to ask you to stand. If you don't want to include it, remain sitting. But people on Zoom, since you have a good Internet connection, I would like you to vote. If you are against including it, then please vote against it. Yes?

TODD MCFARLAND: We'll have confusion if we try to combine ElectionBuddy with standing.

ARTUR A STELE: This is the trouble with having a lawyer beside you and he is big, and he tells me that we all have to use ElectionBuddy, otherwise the system will have challenges.

GERSON P SANTOS: Mr. Chair, I believe a large number, hundreds of people in this room, can turn off their Wi-Fi connection and use their cellular data. If you're able to do that, please do that right now. I did this in the beginning of the meeting already, and several around us. Please, if you are able to

turn off your Wi-Fi and just use your phone data, do that. Do that. This will ease the congestion in the Internet connection in the room. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Alright. Thank you so much. So please let's go, everyone who has data, turn to data and disconnect the Wi-Fi so that we will provide Wi-Fi for those who don't have data systems. Alright. And then, Brother Secretary, can you probably formulate what we are voting?

ARTUR A STELE: We have a point of order, Ken Mapp.

KEN MAPP: If a motion is on the table and it has been seconded, there should be an opportunity for discussion. It has not been allowed for, first of all. Secondly, we have not yet confirmed, what we were trying to do in the initial stages of this business meeting, we have not yet confirmed if everyone is in a position to vote, especially by ElectionBuddy, because we did all the regularization, the confirmation initially and we got our thousand-plus votes, but then there were issues raised of the voting process. And you can't have a meeting of people with hands, people with legitimate hands who can raise it and have them feeling as if they have no hands, that they can't even vote. So, on reasonable grounds, what is happening is wrong. Not even going into the issue of the vaccination, or why it is wrong, or why Mr. Wilson's expression might really need some reflection. In that, if we are going on what Mr. Wilson says, then we might as well take out the Fundamental Belief about Christian behavior from our books, because that Fundamental Belief speaks to the issue of taking care of our temples. That Fundamental Belief speaks to the use of intelligent use of narcotics and drugs. It speaks to us dealing with those issues. So, if we are going the way of that vote to not discuss a critical divisive issue, then we might as well take out that on the books. And I must say this Church has never been afraid of divisive issues and I'm listening to the language, common, consensus, unity, common consensus, unity. We better be careful. We've got to be careful about those agendas. Time is running out, but I'll say in closing very,

very simply. Brethren, let's think. This is our Church. Let's not be guided by words and the semantics of words. Let's stand up for our Church.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We have another point of order, microphone number five, Solomon Maphosa.

SOLOMON MAPHOSA: Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR A STELE: Yes, please.

SOLOMON MAPHOSA: It's with regards to the use of the voting system. We do appreciate that people are advised to turn off whatever other devices they have, including using their data. I am thinking of my brothers and sisters from SID, buying data here using foreign currency may be difficult. And so, Mr. Chairman, unless the chair finds it okay that a large section of our people do not vote, maybe we can continue that way. But if we want our people to all participate fully, I think the idea of standing will be much better because they came here to vote. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Brother Solomon. There was already expressed a wish to stop the discussion. Let's first have a vote to stop the discussion. If you are for it, you vote "yes" to stop the discussion. If you are against it, you say "no," you want to continue the discussion. So, let's vote. Let's go to ElectionBuddy, and if you would like to stop the discussion, please vote "yes." If you would like to continue the discussion, please vote "no." It will take us a second.

ARTUR A STELE: Alright. We have some issues in life that you can speak days, and days, and days, and you will never come to a common denominator, and this is one of the issues. You can spend the whole summer, and those who have one opinion will move away from the same opinion they had before.

So, please, if you would like to stop the discussion, vote “yes.” If you would like to continue, vote “no.” If someone still has a problem, please go to the technical people to clarify it. Yes, Norbert, microphone number two.

NORBERT ZENS: We still have the situation that several in our delegation are not able to vote.

ARTUR A STELE: Alright. Let's see how many votes we got and then those who were not able to, I will ask you.

TODD MACFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, we have 1,712 votes. That's approximately 64 percent of the entire delegate group. So, we are now, Mr. Chairman, at 1,729 with about 89 people trying to vote; So, we should give it a couple more minutes.

ARTUR A STELE: Okay. Let's give a little bit more time. Okay, let's close the vote. We will see the results in a minute. So, you can see we have 1,581 people that would like to stop all the discussion, 291 for it. So, the discussion ceases. We will not accept any more comments, and we will proceed immediately to the actual amendment. Now, we actually ask you to vote the amendment down or up, and after we have done it, we have finished our morning session.

I see microphone number two, point of order?

GIZELLE LOU CABAHUG: Yes, a point of order. We are trying to access ElectionBuddy. I tried personally to turn the Wi-Fi off and turn to my data. Nevertheless, we could not receive even e-mail, and I believe that does not only pertain to me, but some, and many delegates. We have come here personally to be present, and having this would disenfranchise many of the delegates, so I respectfully seek to have a reconsideration, that we who are present be allowed to vote and not face this difficulty.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We really appreciate your concern, and please, if you can proceed to talk to the technical staff, they will help you to connect. If you're a visitor, you don't need to go to that. Just use your Wi-Fi and we have seen the evidence that it really works.

Alright. So, let's vote now on the amendment. If you would like to add the issue, you vote "yes." If you would like not to add it, please vote "no." So, this is the amendment. If you would like to add the issue of vaccination to the agenda, then you vote "yes." If you don't want it added, then vote "no," and don't forget to submit it.

Alright. So, we have almost the same picture, 88 percent voted "no" and this brings us to end of our morning session, and we will ask our treasurer, Dr. Paul Douglas, to have our prayer. Please pray for the food also, Pastor Douglas.

[The meeting closed with prayer by Paul Douglas.]