

SEVENTH BUSINESS MEETING

Sixty-First General Conference Session, June 8, 2022, 9:15 a.m.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Good morning, saints of God, my brothers and sisters, delegates to the General Conference Session. Let us find our seats and prepare to engage in the business of the morning.

As you are taking your seats and before we open, I have a few announcements. And I'll begin probably at the end, just by way of notification. At the end of the session, we will be calling President Mario Brito of the Inter-European Division to offer the closing prayer, and for the opening prayer this morning, we will have Solomon Maphosa of the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division. Those who are giving the prayers, please be sure to scan your badges and give us an indication of the microphone you will be using. For example, I would like for President Brito to use microphone 2 because I can see that he is right here. Dr Maphosa is farther back, and you may choose to come forward or stay where you are as long as we know where you are. Thank you so much. And I will call you in just a moment.

Announcement number two, I just want to thank each one of you delegates for your faithfulness in being present in this place, casting your votes each day. You have been faithful, and the numbers attest to that. But when we're up here, we can see that you are here. So, we thank you for that. And, in addition, I want to thank you for wearing your badges at all times. You know that they are required. Now, when we're up here, we have to take ours off. But when we're down with you or walking through the corridors, we wear ours as well. That is a requirement for our safety. And so, we thank you for being faithful in that which you have done. And I thank you also for showing the love of God to the many individuals who are here caring for us in various ways, in security and food service and directing us in the hallways, all the things that they do. They tell us that they really appreciate your kindness, your gentleness with them, your expression of appreciation to them. They're happy to have us here, and they have expressed that.

Our next announcement, the other day we tried at least once or twice to get a little exercise in. Are you beginning to feel a little stiff, a little bogged down? It's Wednesday. We've been doing this all day, every day and into the evening. Well, Dr Peter Landless, who loves us and looks out for all of us all the time, suggested that we stand up when we have an opportunity. And what is the perfect opportunity? He thought, of course, that three-minute span that we use for voting! So, I tried just once the other day, but we have agreed that we're going to try to do this on a regular basis, today, this morning, and perhaps this afternoon, if it works well.

So, when we are awaiting the voting results, we're going to enrich that experience with exercise; so, we will cast our ballots, and then we will stand up and move in place, of course, for the three minutes. Maybe that will help all of us. I know I need it.

Additionally, some of you have expressed appreciation for the adjustment in temperature, and we will continue to observe that. And finally, now this evening there will be an adjustment in the order of the program. As you know, we have placed the devotional, the worship experience at the end, thinking that that's how we would want to close out our day. But it seems that for you, it would work better for all of us if we switch those and have the worship, the devotional message first and then have that followed by the business session. You will hear more about that later. So, I believe, my colleagues, this exhausts our list of announcements. And if we can see where Dr Maphosa is, we will be prepared to rise for that opening prayer.

And I'm a little hesitant because, as you have noticed, there's so much going on. Individuals are being pulled almost constantly so sometimes when an individual is poised and ready for something, they're pulled into another meeting. So, if we can see if Dr Maphosa is at one of the microphones, number 1? Excellent. I hear that voice. Thank you so much. Let us rise together for opening prayer.

[Prayer by Solomon Maphosa.]

ELLA S SIMMONS: Well, we are ready for our calibration vote. Elder Mooroven?

[Calibration vote on ElectionBuddy with Hensley M Moorrooven.]

HENSLEY M MOORROOVEN: Now we will go to the item that you had previously announced. We are ready to continue with our items on the Constitution and Bylaws. But first of all, we will need to do some housekeeping here, just to be sure that we are on the same wavelength. I would like to ask my dear Sister Sherri to put on the screen the agenda of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee so that we can show you what we have accomplished, where we have an item that will be referred to the Committee and where we will begin this morning, and I would like also to share with you what will happen this evening. So, item 201, is already covered. Item 202 on your agenda, same thing, 203, 204, 205 were voted. So, they will find their way in the governing document of the General Conference. You will recall, delegates, that item 206, specially two items, one relates to the definition of "front-line," and the other one is about the voting of the minutes of an Annual Council and a Spring Meeting of the General Conference. They were referred to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

Therefore, Madam Chair, just after this announcement, we will begin today with item 207 on the agenda. Now is the announcement.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Well, before you begin. I'm sorry, Brother Hensley, we have a point of order on microphone number 2, Stefan Giuliani, Inter-American Division.

STEFAN GIULIANI: Inter-European Division.

ELLA S SIMMONS: I'm so sorry. It came out. Inter-European Division. I was with you. You are my division now because I was with your caucus. So, I don't know what's wrong with me. Thank you.

STEFAN GIULIANI: I just have a question for clarification. I think last night we had an open motion that was not completed yet.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Please let me confer on that because I was not the Chair. Okay. There is a reason for this. We will deal with that probably at another time, but I'm going to turn to Elder Moorrooven since he was actually in the chair.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Thank you very much. Indeed, our brother is perfectly right, but we have a technical challenge. If we do not complete the Constitution and Bylaws items today and present them to the Committee tonight, there is no way for us to ensure that they are properly voted.

So, if we get permission from the floor, we would like to continue with Constitution and Bylaws items today and then go back to *Church Manual*. Thank you very much for your kindness. And another technical challenge, Madam Chair. Initially I was supposed to present the Constitution and Bylaws last night. That was planned so that we can meet the deadline of tonight, but then I was asked to serve over there. Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: And this allows the Committee to address the various questions and concerns and suggestions that have been raised from the floor. Okay; back to you, Elder Moorrooven.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Thank you. So, here is the announcement. You have made comments, we have taken notes, but if you still have comments on what will be presented today, we invite you to join Room 160. This is where the Constitution and Bylaws Committee will meet. We will meet from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. today. This is during suppertime. We have taken your recommendations. We will study them there. But if one or two or three of you would like to meet with us, please, feel welcome to join us. We want to hear from you right away. We want to share with you what the recommendations are so that we limit the time here on the floor. Because, as has become abundantly clear to all of us, our greatest enemy at this Session is the clock; it's the clock.

So, Let's go now to the composition of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee so that you don't have any question on whether or not you are serving on that committee. It is part of the agenda packet in the General Agenda. You can click on the Session Committees, and you will see Constitution and Bylaws. I think we have done some housekeeping. I think everything is ready for us to begin. If you are on Zoom, and you have comments, please, your Zoom coordinator, as I speak, is sending you the Zoom

link to that same committee so that if you are on site, Room 160; and if you are on Zoom, you are getting a link to Room 160 this afternoon. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Brother Hensley, we have two more points of order on English Zoom 101, Ken Mapp, Tobago Mission, this time Inter-American Division. Yes, brother.

KEN MAPP: Good morning, everyone. Nice to see everybody. I stand on a point of order that we made an error in procedure on the first day of our Session. The Church is still in session so we still have an opportunity to correct it. I therefore move that we vote on the actual motion that was actually given by Brother Jonathan. We voted on a rephrased motion that didn't represent correctly his motion on the floor. I know that we ordinarily can't bring back a motion in the same setting, but the records of the ElectionBuddy system would show that we did not vote on a motion as a people and second it. There's an additional benefit of fixing it. We have a chance as a body to address a pattern that is against the policies of our Church. Apparently, there's a coin called SDA Beliefs and one side says fundamental and the next side says policy. We in this session have been changing Fundamental Beliefs by changing policy. Case in point, we voted that elders, whether male or female, once elected, must be ordained.

ELLA S SIMMONS: My brother, my brother, you indicated that you wanted to bring us a point of order. I believe you've gone beyond that. I hear, and I think I understand what you're saying and where you're going. We're listening carefully, but we're going to declare that this is not a point of order, and if at the appropriate time, when we are addressing that item on the agenda, please come back into the queue for a regular discussion. And even if you have a motion at that time, we will be open to receiving that. I appreciate what you're saying, and we will go forward.

A point of order is handled differently, however. Thank you so much.

Now on microphone number 2, Petronio Genebago. Southern Asia-Pacific Division. Microphone number 2. You have a point of order? Or issue?

PETRONIO GENEBAJO: So, my question is, do we need to consume all the three minutes intended to vote if we have the needed number of votes already? Or can we cut the time when the needed votes are already in?

ELLA S SIMMONS: I'm going to rule that that also is not a point of order, but you're asking for clarification on process. Perhaps at the appropriate time, we can address that as well. But from this moment, we'll probably proceed with the rules that we have put in place for processing each item with the time limits and so forth.

PETRONIO GENEBAJO: Okay, thank you Mrs. Chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: I appreciate your offer there. Brother Hensley?

HENSLEY M MOOROVEN: Thank you very much. I have invited, intentionally, the General Counsel of the General Conference, Brother Karnik Doukmetzian. He will help me in dealing with these constitutional items. Whenever there are difficult questions, Karnik will answer them, and easy questions are for me. Is that a rule? Wonderful. Karnik, thank you for your presence. We will move along together.

Now, Let's be sure that we are together when it comes to what we are doing now. You still remember that this is the organizational face of mission. That's the administrative face of administration. It is the other side of the same coin. We still have, and I hope you are wearing your missional glasses with your missional lenses to see all these policies and Constitution and Bylaws items that we are presenting to you. We have the glasses of mission because mission is served by policy, by Constitution, and by Bylaws. I think this is something already talked about. Now, let me take you to the agenda item for today. So, Let's go to item 207. And on your agenda book, this is page 43, and I will give you the rationale behind what we are doing. And then we will go to the item itself.

What are we doing here, Madam Chair and delegates? You know that the *GC Working Policy* is amended every year at the Annual Council. This big book, the policies that go there are amended at Annual Council.

We had previously at an Annual Council in 2017, amended the section that talks about “for cause,” to describe what it is about. So, we have amended that. I want to show the delegates what policies we are talking about.

So, this is an excerpt from this book. And it has already been voted by Annual Council. You see the definition of the phrase “for cause,” and you see it already has six items. This has already been approved by the Annual Council. Are we together?

When we look at the D section of this book, it was also amended at Annual Council to reflect B 45 20. This book now has B 45 20, and the D section, Article 2, Section 10 that already has the six definitions, the six items in the definition of “for cause.” But because we can amend the Constitution and Bylaws only at Session, we need now to align the two documents. And that’s what we are doing. We are not creating anything. We are just aligning these two documents so that our governing document and the policy will speak the same language.

Before I move it, we are also including on line 2 of page 44 that this “for cause” also is applicable for members of the GC Executive Committee. If it is clear to the body that we are aligning the two documents, one already voted, one in the process of being voted, if it is clear, I move this item, Madam Chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. We have the motion before us. Is there support for this motion? Yes. Thank you. I hear seconds. And allowing time for questions and comments, I see now the queue is filling. We’re going to go first to microphone number 6, Flaviano Dalisay. Southeastern California Conference, NAD. Okay.

FLAVIANO DALISAY: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I appreciate your work in this process. Can you provide clarification into section C on this recommended amendment? Number 1. It would seem that we would be adding a state of redundancy by adding line 2 since membership on the General Conference Executive Committee could already be considered an elected or maybe an appointed position. Number 2. Can you define at which levels of the worldwide organization are the departments, associations, services, and committee members? And number 3. Do we have a formal definition of what is incompetence and also what is persistent failure to cooperate? Thank you.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Thank you. We will begin with the last one first, if it is your pleasure.

ELLA S SIMMONS: If you will, yes, please.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: Madam Chair, since we are only dealing with the additions that are being proposed, we ought to stick to the discussion of theft, embezzlement, or conviction or guilty plea of a crime.

Regarding the redundancy question, the Executive Committee is made up of elected individuals of the General Conference itself, in addition to many others from different parts of the world, including union representatives, conference representatives, laypeople, pastors, teachers, et cetera. When we put in the definition "for cause," since this Constitution and Bylaws are only impacting the General Conference itself, we have to have a mechanism so that membership on the Executive Committee can be looked at and determined in light of these definitions "for cause."

Let me give you a very simple example. Let's assume one of you who is a member of the Executive Committee goes down the street here and decides to rob the bank. Now, that's a crime in this country. But your particular entity does not wish to take action to remove you from office. This allows the General Conference Executive Committee to say this individual has committed a crime, even though he's not our employee, we are able to remove him from membership on the Executive Committee.

That's all this refers to, is those individuals being removed from membership on the Executive Committee where they have been accused or convicted of any of these six particular items.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you, Brother Karnik. Please continue, are there other pieces after that?

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: I think we have covered the items.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Already? Then we go to microphone number 2, Johannes Bochmann, Berlin-Central German Conference, Inter-European Division.

JOHANNES BOCHMANN: Yes, thank you Madam Chair and thank you to the brother from General Conference Counsel for pointing out what this amendment is actually about. And I believe it is very clear, but it was good that you clarified this once again that this is about removing ex-officio members from the General Conference Executive Committee. I stand here speaking against this part of the motion. I believe it has a lot to do with the question of mutual trust in all our Church levels at all levels, be it the General Conference, be it the divisions, be it the other departments, or union conferences.

Now, if we stick to that example that you have just given (which I have no reason to believe; he's sitting here) my union conference president went out and robbed a bank, then I would certainly want my union executive committee to be informed of that. And I would believe that the General Conference Executive Committee should trust that the union committee takes the appropriate steps. I see a deep-rooted mistrust. And I don't think this is helpful for our Church organization if we include executive committee members who are ex-officio on the General Conference Executive Committee. And while I agree with the other parts of this amendment, namely adding theft, embezzlement and so on to align with *Working Policy*, I move to divide the question in such a way that we vote separately on the inclusion of the words "or from membership on the General Conference Executive Committee" as pointed out in page 44, lines 1 and 2. Thank you very much.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you very much. As we look at this before moving forward, I certainly appreciate Brother Bochmann's speech on this. It is so very important that we operate within the Church family from a logic of confidence. And yet we have to take a global view, a global perspective on everything we do. And while most of us would conduct the Church's business, would be faithful and reliable just as you have described, it is unfortunate that there are possibilities, and perhaps even historically accurate, there could be instances in which the Church has come under undue scrutiny and challenge as a result of an individual in a position to take action who did not. I hope that says enough. But we will need to look at how we want to proceed with this. If we are ready to proceed, we have a motion to divide the items. This requires a second.

All right. I did hear a second. I was waiting for confirmation of that. We do not have debate or discussion on this so, we're going to ask you to prepare with your devices to vote. And we should see the motion shortly. Okay. We're almost ready to vote.

And while we're moving to this, I want to return just a moment as we begin to use ElectionBuddy to the point made by our brother from the Inter-American Division previously regarding the time allocation for the voting process. You do realize that over the past couple of days we've had several people request that we have an extension of time, that is, to increase the time allocation, and others, like yourself, have wanted to decrease that time allocation. So, we have established the three-minute rule, but we have tried to be legally and appropriately considerate of circumstances.

We are ready to vote. The motion is to divide the question on the motion General Conference Executive Committee Constitution and Bylaws, Section 1, into two parts, and that is item number 207 in your materials.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Madam Chair, it is open for voting.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay, everyone please exercise your responsibility for voting on this item. If you vote "yes," you want to divide the items as proposed by the brother in the motion. If you vote "no,"

you want to leave the items connected as presented by the undersecretary. Remember to submit, and we are going to stand up and stretch as we complete this vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: Madam Chair, despite the exercise, people are still able to cast their ballots.

ELLA S SIMMONS: And our three minutes have been expended; so, let us close and see where we are.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Madam Chair, we're closing this, and it will be displayed here momentarily.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. We have "yes" 935, 57 percent and "no" 699 votes, just under 43 percent. And we need a simple majority on this, therefore, the motion carries. We will proceed to divide the item.

TODD MCFARLAND: So, Madam Chair, if I may, this brings us to a new item. I would recommend that we clear the queue of people wanting to speak, and then we will have people re-scan in for the first item only. Is that acceptable, Madam Chair?

ELLA S SIMMONS: That is acceptable. In fact, that is wisdom so that we keep everything in order. Please state for the body exactly what we will deal with in this segment so that those who wish to speak will position themselves appropriately.

HENSLEY M MOOROVEN: Based on the desire of the house, I am therefore moving only the first part, which would be the end of line 1 and the rest from line 2, "or from membership on the General Conference Executive Committee." And then later on, we will handle the rest. Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Before we take the speaker, I want to check one point, please. All right. We will go to microphone number 1, Ralf Hartmann, Bavarian Conference, Inter-European Division. Please speak to us.

RALF HARTMANN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I suspect that this point is to be included to allow for enforcement of disciplinary measures with respect to noncompliance, which provides for removal for cause after warning and public reprimand, which is at least in conflict with this part of the Constitution, as I understand it.

Surely the real intent behind the section is to remove individuals for personal misconduct which, of course, must be possible. However, we have just seen in the question of the ordination of women that the union president in question is noncompliant not primarily out of personal conviction but as a representative of their constituency. To exclude them from the Executive Committee because of this is to silence the voice and representation of a part of our Church. In a Church that has consciously organized itself in a representative way, such a development would be highly dangerous and must be resolutely rejected.

Where would we be as a world Church if we had not also heard disagreeable voices which in some places have proved to be an important corrective?

It could be argued that union presidents can also engage in personal misconduct, but then this must be resolved not in Executive Committee but at the union level, and a new person must be elected. Therefore, I'm in favor of rejecting this addition.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Speaking against the motion. Okay. If there is no immediate response, we're going to go to microphone number 2 twice, Reinhard Gallos, Northern Rhenish-Westphalian Conference. Inter-European Division. It's your time.

REINHARD GALLOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to speak against this because points 1 and 2 are not defined in a proper way. What is incompetence? What is persistent failure to cooperate with duly constituted authority in substantive matters and so forth?

I think we are very clear about the other points like 3, 4, 5, 6, nobody wants to have a member there robbing a bank. But these two points and it was questioned before and still not answered and not

defined and opens the door for arbitrariness in deciding who is removed from that and not. So, I will speak very clearly and boldly against this. Thank you very much.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you very much. Again, is there a response?

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: It will be extremely brief, my response, because this is not the item on the floor. But we have heard you. We will take note. We will. Unfortunately, not this item on the floor, which is one, which is underlined. That's the part that the committee worked on and is submitting to you. The other sections have been in existence, and they exist already in the policy and in the model constitution of our entities. So, we will proceed. Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Brother Hensley, would you please restate the item, show the delegates the item that we're actually working on.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: May I kindly ask my Sister Sherri, I know you are very busy down here. Can we go to the very item, the one that we are discussing, which would be from the agenda book? Can you kindly put on the screen the item that we are alluding to, which would be 207. That's the one.

ELLA S SIMMONS: And just this portion; right? We want to point that out.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Here we go. Thank you very much.

ELLA S SIMMONS: There is a point of order on microphone number 2. Jaanus-Janari Kogerman. Okay. Estonian Conference, Trans-European Division, TED.

JAANUS-JANARI KOGERMAN: Thank you, Mrs. Chair. I do believe that this is a point of order. I would like to say that not only the underlined section is under discussion at the moment because we are expanding the list of those to whom also that section which is not underlined is going to be applied.

I do believe that when we are talking about the membership of the General Conference Executive Committee, then we have to apply also the words "incompetence" and other points following that part.

I do call to let us speak about those points, 1 to 4 in connection with those who are the members of that General Conference Executive Committee, which are added as suggested. Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you, my brother. Trying to sort out, to be fair, whether or not that's a point of order, but remember we just went through the process of dividing this to focus specifically on this one section so we're going to stick to that at this point. But if we need to do something later, we are open to hearing.

Going back to Elder Doukmetzian and Elder Mooroooven. Is there anything else there? If not, we will go to the next speaker at microphone 2, Martin Altink, North German Union Conference in the Inter-European Division.

MARTIN ALTINK: Thank you, Mrs. Chair. I would like to ask a very plain and clear question, and the question is, can union or conference presidents who are "noncompliant" be taken out of the Executive Committee when we are adding this underlined piece in sentence 1 and 2?

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. I'll turn to our colleagues here, Elder Doukmetzian perhaps first.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: I think the current wording of the section speaks for itself. There are a number of reasons presently without the addition of the new ones that would allow this to happen. And whether you consider those individuals to be appointed or elected, I think it could apply to them. The section we are intending to add I think provides more clarification to what's already there.

MARTIN ALTINK: And in that way it goes beyond the points which we are going to discuss later, and that is sentences 6 and 7. Am I right? According to what you just said, that means that it goes much further than what you earlier explained about theft or embezzlement, et cetera. Line 2 goes much further than what you just explained about theft. Is that correct?

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: Line 2 simply expands or better defines who is covered by the section. Remember, we're talking about the Constitution of the General Conference itself. Nothing else. But when you look at, for example, the model constitutions of unions and conferences, these sections are

already there. When you look at the reasons for discipline of ministers in *Working Policy*, these provisions are already there. If you look at reasons for discipline of teachers, these provisions are already there. We want to be consistent and be a good example to all our organizations that the General Conference follows its own policies. And this provides us with the option, if it should exist, for individuals who are members of the Executive Committee to be dealt with based on these criteria.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: And if I may add, please. Without this, there is no vehicle, there is no provision for us to apply to remove someone from the membership of the General Conference Executive Committee because this exists at all levels of the Church. And we want to align ourselves with what we do. The sole intention is to allow the General Conference a vehicle for removing someone from membership.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Brother, we will allow you one more time and they need to adjust the microphone and then we'll have to move on. But thank you. Continue.

MARTIN ALTINK: I understand this. But without the approval of this body which has a higher authority than the other committees, you probably, in the other body, need to go back to the drawing board. Is that correct?

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: No. That's not correct. This body has the authority to amend the Constitution and Bylaws of the General Conference. The policies and the models and procedures that are outlined in the General Conference *Working Policy* that the whole Church follows are voted by the Executive Committee and must be followed. What is provided for in the Constitution can only be voted by this body, and that's why we're here.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. We're going to move to microphone number 5. Dennis Matekenya, Malawi Union Conference, Southern Africa-Indian Division.

DENNIS MATEKENYA: Madam Chair, I am concerned about the potential victimization that may occur by the phrase "persistent failure to cooperate." I wish we would have "persistent refusal" as

opposed to “persistent failure” because there is potential of victimizing a union conference for the behavior and actions of a particular conference.

ELLA S SIMMONS: My brother, if I may interrupt, I’m just trying to verify this. I believe we are focusing on only one item and perhaps this item is not the item that we’re on at this moment. Please correct me, Undersecretary, if I am wrong.

HENSLEY M MOOROVEN: You are perfectly right. When you as a body decided to separate the two, it means that now we are dealing solely, only with the sentence, “or from membership on the General Conference Executive Committee.” This is to honor the decision of this body. If your comment could be limited to that section, it would help us make progress. Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: I’m so sorry to interrupt, but we must stick to this. Thank you very much. Going to microphone number 2, Hilde Huru, North Norway Conference, Trans-European Division, please.

HILDE HURU: Madam Chair, I would like to speak against this motion to add the sentence of removal from the General Conference Executive Committee. We have a long tradition in our Church of having a democratic structure. Ellen G White has stated the importance of how to run our Church business in such a way that kingly power cannot be used to make decisions from the top down in our Church. It should come from the bottom up. And since our union presidents are ex-officio members of the committee, they have the support of their constituencies, it should not be possible for a body higher up in the system to exercise their power against the Church democracy to remove these people from the committee. This is the job of the constituency that elected them, to remove them from the position they have if they do not represent us. And we see this as a challenge or a problem in the situation we have been in in Scandinavia in the last years where we have tried to conform, and we have still been seen as not conforming and in that way to be in opposition to the GC. And, on the other hand, we have had votes in all our conferences and in our union and 90 percent of the membership have expressly said that they are supporting the leadership in the way they have been handling these issues. I think it would

be wrong to remove democracy from our Church. It would be against Ellen White to remove democracy from our Church. And therefore, I move against adding this sentence.

ELLA S SIMMONS: You speak against the motion. Okay.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Madam Chair,

ELLA S SIMMONS: Yes.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Just before my colleagues give a complementary answer to what I will say, Sister Hilde, this is exactly what we want to do from bottom to top. That's what you alluded to, because it exists for local pastors. There's a way to discipline. It exists for teachers. We can do it at conference level. We can do it at union level. This is exactly what we are attempting to do. We are following exactly what our sister is saying. Thank you.

HILDE HURU: Well, I disagree because we are removing these people according to the principles of which level of the church is going to do it, not the level above.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you.

HILDE HURU: Not the level who elected them.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: But let me also remind the body that the General Conference Executive Committee is presently made up of 345 individuals. Union presidents form a fraction of that number, not anywhere near a majority. So, this applies to every single member of the General Conference Executive Committee and the standard to which they must be held as members of that committee.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. I'm going to move to microphone number 1, Paul Bhaggiem, Southern Asia Division.

PAUL BHAGGIEM: Thank You, Madam Chair. I wish to speak against the motion, as I believe this is highly suspect and smacks of distrust in leaders elected to their offices because they are noncompliant for conscientious reasons. Chair, I humbly submit that we tread this path cautiously for if we do not, we

run the risk of turning this policy provision, which should work a greater good for mission, into a rod of censure. This also has the potential to be distracting from our missional goals. How much of our funds, financial resources, human resources, and the resource of time will go into its implementation I do not know. We don't want to go down the slippery slope of decadence and self-destruction but a path upward, uplifting, empowering, ennobling fellow travelers, even those who dissent with us for conscientious reasons. I hope my Church can move beyond insensitive majoritarianism and carry along those who may disagree with our majoritarian ideologies.

Chair, I wish for my Church to be a church triumphant and not a church imperial, a church persecuted and not a church persecuting, a church graceful and gracious and not a church graceless in any way, a church reflecting the virtues of Christ, to be loving, though unloved, to be forgiving when unjustly wronged, to be meek and lowly in the midst of a world intoxicated with power, pomp, and self-glory, to be gentle, kind, and seeking our Good Shepherd, even when our flock willfully wanders away. That's the Church we want. Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you so much. Now microphone number 2, Gizelle Lou Cabahug, North Philippine Union Conference in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

GIZELLE LOU CABA HUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would just like to raise some clarifications on the sixth ground for removal, "conviction of or guilty plea for a crime." In many jurisdictions they criminalize mere failure to submit certain documents to the government. Should we qualify a crime as a crime involving moral turpitude from mere petty crimes?

For instance, there are officers that may be part of certain organizations, and they are the members of the board, maybe part of a litigation for mere failure to comply.

And second, on the conviction, should this refer to final conviction because this may raise certain issues that would be contentious.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you.

GIZELLE LOU CABAHUNG: Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Obviously we cannot address every possibility, but in a general manner. We will turn to Elder Doukmetzian and Elder Mooroooven as necessary.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: Madam Chair, we're dealing with the first part of the motion. If the question can remain until we get to the second part, I'd be more than happy to attempt an answer.

ELLA S SIMMONS: We have several individuals in the queue. I think I'm seeing about 15. Please be sure that your comment, your expression of support, or expression of your lack of support—that is, speaking against the motion, speaking in favor of the motion—would be in regard to the specific item that we have divided out and decided to handle apart from the rest. It is before you. Please take a look at this. If your comments do not pertain specifically and only to this item, please hold your comment until later. Perhaps, even this morning, we will get to it. And if we see those drop out, we would assume that you're waiting. If everyone remains in the queue, we will give it our best. But we will do more than just this one item this morning. We will plan. Let's look at this again. We're looking at the highlighted section underlined and highlighted, "or from membership on the General Conference Executive Committee." It has been explained in more than one way, but I'm not sure even at this point that it is clear to everyone. I cannot explain why that is, but we want to be sure that everyone understands. Okay, we're going to go to microphone number 8, Mario Veloso, General Conference.

MARIO VELOSO: Thank you, Madam Chair. My point is related to the item that was authorized to separate only. We should pay attention to some of the reasons presented. One is that we should work from the bottom up. I agree and support and would fight for that. But where is the bottom up? The bottom is right here. We have representatives of the whole world Church. If we say that this is not the bottom, then we are taking away the power of the bottom. This is representation. Whatever we approve here is a directive to the bodies of the Church organization on how they should operate.

When the decision is taken here, it goes to the whole body of the organization, then we are giving directives to them. And for that reason, I would like to clarify that which has been presented very clearly—that we should vote according to the understanding of giving the directive to the Church. And that is the power of this assembly. Thank you. Madam Chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. All right. And microphone number 5. We have Mandla Se-Bantwini Lupondwana, Southern Africa Union Conference in the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

MANDLA SE-BANTWINI LUPONDWANA: Thank you, Chair. I speak in favor of the motion. It appears that after we decided to divide the motion, we were left as the first part with the decision of whether this policy should apply to all elected and appointed members of the General Conference Executive Committee.

I think we would all agree that all members of the General Conference Executive Committee who find themselves in these sticky situations, the Executive Committee should have the means to remove them. This is the first part. The second part which we are yet to discuss is what's going to deal with, can an individual be disciplined for decisions of their organization? We can have the discussion which will be the second part of the motion. I'm one of those people who believe that people should not individually be disciplined or victimized for decisions taken for their organizations. But it appears we are not there yet. So far, we are simply saying, if we agree that people who have been found guilty of murder, who are members of the Executive Committee should be removed and the Executive Committee must have the mechanism to do so, then we can vote "yes" on this part. If we disagree with other reasons, those will be covered in the next section. And I think we can go into detail on what we should change on the reasons for removing people for cause. As this session stands, I speak in favor of the motion. Thank you, Chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. On microphone number 2 we will have Stefan Giuliani, Inter-European Division.

STEFAN GIULIANI: Madam Chair, I'd like to ask Elders Mooroooven and Doukmetzian to perhaps restate the intention by including members of the Executive Committee in this passage and then I'd like to follow up with a motion, probably.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Thank you very much. We can reiterate what we have said over and over and over again, that is, we are including this section here because there is a mechanism for all levels of the Church structure, but there is not for the GC Executive Committee. We would like to have some provision in our governing document to take care of the Executive Committee of the GC.

STEFAN GIULIANI: Thank you. I think we have heard many arguments in favor and against this motion. I think it's time to vote. Therefore, I'd just like to ask which motion would be appropriate at this time, whether you want to take it back to the committee in any way or whether I should call the previous motion.

ELLA S SIMMONS: I believe that's going to be up to you if you want to do that. And the microphone is open to you.

STEFAN GIULIANI: My question was whether it was planned to take it back to the committee anyway.

ELLA S SIMMONS: There has been no request from the desk to take it back.

STEFAN GIULIANI: Okay. Then I will call the previous question.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. And with that, we close all discussion. I'm looking to see who is where. And we will have no discussions, no amendment on that. And the motion is to call the previous question, cease all debate, and proceed immediately to voting on this item. And so, we need to exercise our responsibility in making this decision first.

TODD MCFARLAND: Madam Chair, it is opening up here briefly and will be open now.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. Get your next vote ready. Please follow. If you are voting “yes,” you vote to close this discussion and go right to the action on this item. Please remember to submit your vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Madam Chair. We are closing the ballot as we speak. Looks like 1,674 were able to cast, and it will be displayed here momentarily.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Excellent. Okay, the motion carries 91.5 percent, 1,531 votes. So, then we will proceed to the motion. And we will follow our technology on this as it comes out. All right. The motion before us is to amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Article XIII, General Conference Executive Committee, Section 1.c., part 1, as found in the Session Agenda under item 207.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Madam Chair, we are in the process of opening that up, and it should be opened up here momentarily.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. ElectionBuddy is working. And I trust that those of you on Zoom are taking advantage of the opportunities to stand and stretch with us.

TODD MCFARLAND: Madam, the motion is open, and people are able to vote now.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. Let us exercise our sacred responsibility and cast the vote on this item that is before us.

TODD MCFARLAND: Madam Chair, with 20 seconds left, we are just under 1,600. So maybe we can get over that threshold. And I would remind you, Madam Chair, this requires a two-thirds majority to pass.

ELLA S SIMMONS: All right. The motion carries with 82 percent. That is clearly more than two-thirds, with 18 percent against. Thank you very much. Having been engaged. Did we determine if Glenn Townend is in with us right now? Please, Elder microphone 1? Is that where you are? Please call us to prayer for a moment before we go to the next section.

[Prayer by Glenn Townend]

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you, Elder. Well, we're going to go to the second part of this item.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: We are going to go to the second part of the item. Madam Chair, I think in our consultation, we have agreed that for the benefit of the house, we will consider, Sherri and Tami, the whole section not only numbers 5 and 6.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. We will follow your lead as you present the item.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: There were some questions that were asked by some lawyers; so, I think a lawyer is appropriate to answer this.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: So, since we divided the motion, we are now dealing with two segments, that is, number 5 and number 6, theft or embezzlement being added, and also conviction or guilty plea of a crime. And the question was asked whether that is the final resolution of a criminal charge, and the answer is, "yes." When a conviction is registered after all appeals and becomes final, that is the time that this provision would come into effect. There are some countries that have criminal charges that are administrative in nature such as when an organization does not pay its appropriate taxes, then the officers of that organization may be charged with a crime. The intent here is for the individual and the charges that an individual faces such as, for example, drunk driving or physical abuse or murder or robbing a bank, those sorts of things that an individual commits as opposed to an organizational crime.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you, Elder Doukmetzian. So, then we need to look at the item to which we will turn our attention at this point and will go to our undersecretary to walk us through this.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: After this explanation, I am ready to move this section that is highlighted. And the motion has been made.

ELLA S SIMMONS: I think we already have that. And so, we're really at this point ready to open to questions and comments if need be. And we want to go for clarity. We're going right to microphone

number 8, Paul Ananaba, Lagos Mainland Conference in the West-Central Africa Division. Microphone number 8.

PAUL ANANABA: Madam Chair, I want to say that my brother Karnik will look at it and see that 5 and 6 are disjunctive. And when we leave the General Conference Session and begin to interpret it in our unions and conferences, based on the fact that the GC Executive Committee and the General Conference in session is a policy Session that would trickle down a lot of divergent views.

So, I want to say that 5 should have the word “conviction” for theft and embezzlement, otherwise, it gives the impression that conviction relates to item 6 alone and not 5. So, to get away from that, we should bring the word “conviction for theft or embezzlement” or 6, “conviction of or guilty plea for crime.” Thank you, Madam Chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: I have my own opinion, but I’m going to turn right to our legal counsel.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: Thank you, my brother Paul. The words “theft or embezzlement” have actually been incorporated into the model constitutions and bylaws and are also in the reasons for discipline of ministers. They have been in *Working Policy* for a number of years now. This is not something new. We’re simply adding this to the General Conference Constitution. Let me just say, though, that there are many times when an individual steals and may not be charged by the authorities or convicted of a crime. And so, we want to have an opportunity where an individual has stolen from the organization to be removed from the Executive Committee for that theft, but it may not necessarily result in a criminal charge against them to which they plead guilty or are found guilty. That leaves us with moral crime.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. We’re going to go to microphone number 7, Tim Standish, General Conference.

TIM STANDISH: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe that each one of us and particularly those of us who believe in the principle of religious liberty understand that there are people who have suffered

for the cause of Christ having been convicted of crimes in various places, including here in the United States historically. Seventh-day Adventists have been convicted of the crime of not keeping Sunday holy. In addition to that, the idea of putting this particular part in our Constitution relating to being convicted of a crime actually would eliminate Jesus Christ, the 12 apostles, and all of the martyrs from holding positions of leadership in our Church. This is a misguided policy that will almost inevitably result in abuse. It also places the Church underneath civil authority, and it will almost inevitably be used in that way even though I am well aware of the sophistry that can be put forward to suggest that that is not the case. This will be used against us, and it will be used against faithful Seventh-day Adventists who obey God rather than man. I plead that this wording be referred back to the committee. Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you and we're moving to microphone number 5. Jonathan Burnett, Illinois Conference in the North American Division.

JONATHAN BURNETT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Perhaps you can enlighten me. Maybe it was said, but I didn't understand it. In the situation where someone is convicted of a crime or embezzles, and the institution that they represent does not remove them, but they are removed from the General Conference Executive Committee, what is the process for replacing that representation? We would agree that what they have done is wrong, but how is the institution they represent or the group or church they represented in that situation where the local level doesn't seem to respond to that issue? Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. I'll turn to our colleagues.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: It really depends on by what vehicle that individual ended up on the Executive Committee. If they were appointed, the organization that appointed them or voted them into the Executive Committee would be the one that would replace them. The Executive Committee also has the power to replace individuals, and they can do that as well.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. We're moving to microphone number 8, Nnamdi Onyenmuru, Ebonyi Conference, West-Central Africa Division.

NNAMDI ONYEMURU: The point I want to make is that an accused remains innocent until he's proved guilty. That's why we want to look at if someone has been accused of embezzlement, until they reach a conviction, convinced that the person has committed a crime, he still remains innocent. And that's why we are saying that the "or" should be removed. It should be that if a person has been convicted of embezzlement or theft, the Church is there to uphold the action of the court. So, if someone is alleged of a crime, they could be prematurely removed without being convicted of that particular crime. I think that should be taken into consideration in whatever they are going to decide. Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you, my brother. We understand you're a member of the GCAS Board. Moving on now to the English Zoom, number 101, Daniel Matte, Uganda Union Mission in the East-Central Africa Division. We believe you have multiple devices open in the room where you are located. We do see at least one other person. It appears, brother, we're going to ask you to hold just a moment. We have a point of order on microphone number 2. Catherine Verrecchia. South France Conference, Inter-European Division.

CATHERINE VERRECCHIA: Hello. I just have a question for clarification. In my country, violence on a woman whether within a marriage, whether that violence is physical or economical or psychological is a crime. So, in which country do you count conviction? Because that same crime might not be a crime in another country. So how can you clarify this, please?

ELLA S SIMMONS: Perhaps we cannot receive this as a point of order. So, we will come back to your question in the order of progression through these items. Okay. Going back to Brother Matte, Zoom, English Zoom 101.

DANIEL MATTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I speak in favor of the motion. The Executive Committee as an appointing authority should also have the liberty to discipline members who are guilty of the causes which have been articulated as “for cause.” There is no way an authority will appoint people and cannot hold them responsible for their actions.

However, I understand that the point of contention is in relation to union presidents who are appointed by other authorities and by virtue of their position, they become members of the Executive Committee. In that sense, it would just mean that the GC Executive Committee would block their membership of the Executive Committee pending their appointing authorities to dis-appoint them or remove them from office. Because, after all, removal for cause is also in the bylaws and the constitutions of the union conferences; so, there is no problem with this motion. Madam Chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you very much. And we move to microphone number 5, Tim Bailey, Mountain View Conference, North American Division.

TIM BAILEY: Yes. The point was made that we should trust our unions. And I agree. Likewise, we also need to trust our General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. To that I also want to say I agree. We need to remember that those in leadership are held doubly accountable on God’s judgment day. And I think that we need to not try to take so much individual control but trust in the system and trust in the people that God has placed into leadership. Therefore, I’d like to move forward and express my opinion in the motion as it stands.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. We move again to the English Zoom, number 101, Carl Archer, Jamaica Union, Inter-American Division.

CARL ARCHER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I’d like to speak in support of the motion. I think that as spiritual leaders of our Church, we need to recognize that we have to take responsibility for all regulations or rules that we make in respect of ethical or moral standards. And if we contribute toward making them in any level of governance or regulation in respect of other individuals, at the highest

spiritual level of the Church, those standards need to apply. I do realize that there may be challenges, there may be concerns, sometimes suspicions, but we have to, at some level, trust the General Conference. And I dare say, a high degree of trust in the General Conference. God is leading, and even when we go off track, God is still in charge His Church. So, I do support the motion. I believe that it is appropriate, and I think that the Church must hold all its leaders accountable, even at the highest level; so, I very strongly support that motion, Madam Chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you, brother. Now, we are moving to microphone number 4, Dorinda Smith Arthur, Ashanti Central Ghana Conference, West-Central Africa Division. Microphone number 4.

DORINDA SMITH ARTHUR: Thank you, Mother Chair. My suggestion pertains to the phrase in line number 7 of a crime. I think that for us to have clarity or consistency, yes, conviction of or a guilty plea for a crime, I think a crime should be defined. We should have a defining clause that would tell us what a crime is. Because it is noted that we have administrative crimes that may go against a person. Not necessarily that that person had committed a personal crime. Is it possible that we can have a defining clause that defines crime for consistency, for clarity? Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. We recognize how difficult that would be for an entire world congregation, but I'm going to turn to the legal mind.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: The definition of crime obviously varies from country to country, and if we were to put it in the Constitution, we would need perhaps 500 pages instead of a simple paragraph.

Remember that this is dealing with the Executive Committee making decisions, that discretion is available to the Executive Committee to make determinations, and that it is the Executive Committee that makes this decision, not one individual, but the Committee as a whole. And in order for a matter to pass, for an individual to be removed from the Executive Committee, it requires, based on our Constitution, two-thirds vote. So, it's not just a matter of an individual saying, "this person we think has

committed a crime, let's remove him." It has to be proven, and a decision has to be made by a two-thirds vote.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you very much. We turn to microphone number 5, Mandla Se-Bantwini Lupondwana, Southern Africa Union Conference in the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

MANDLA SE-BANTWINI LUPONDWANA: Thank you, Chair. I speak in favor of the motion. The idea that is expressed in the first part of theft or embezzlement is general enough to cover those instances where our brethren find themselves on the wrong side of financial stewardship and the entity chooses not to pursue a criminal case and we handle it quietly, so to speak. And if we were to place the word "conviction," we would be compelled to take all of those cases and open criminal cases so as to fulfill the requirement of the word "conviction." We have many instances where people have admitted, "I have done this," and there's some form of recourse that the entity agrees on, and we are able to take care of the matter without opening criminal cases. I think leaving it as is would be helpful.

Secondly, I'm wondering if the committee is open to a phrase which would be helpful particularly for those of us who work with children and minors, to insert a phrase, if not at this Session, probably at the next one, that says "or being found guilty of an offense against a child or a minor." We are seeing cases like this happen, and it would be good to express it and not assume it is covered so that the work in protection of children is covered by that phrase. Thank you, Chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you very much. And I have observed that the undersecretary is actually taking note of that. And you indicate that we probably could not insert that by way of composition on the floor at this time but would take that into consideration for future presentation. Of course, you recognize also that there are policies regarding crimes and atrocities against children. But for this specific space, we will take this under advisement and appreciate that. Going to microphone number 2, Stefan Giuliani, Inter-European Division.

STEFAN GIULIANI: Madam Chair, I'd like to call the previous question.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. We have your motion, and we did hear a second again. We recognize that we just move forward with this. And we will require a two-thirds vote. I'm reminding myself of these requirements. Okay. Elder Todd.

TODD MCFARLAND: Madam Chair, we are opening that ballot now. And it should be open here momentarily.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. We are voting on this item currently to call the previous question, that is, to cease all debate and then proceed directly to voting on the motion. So right now, you're voting "yes" if you want to end the debate and go to the motion. You would vote "no" if you want to continue debate. Please vote now.

[Voting]

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Madam Chair, it's being closed, and the results will be displayed momentarily.

ELLA S SIMMONS: We have before us more than two-thirds at 95 percent, 1,539 votes, to call the previous question. So, motion carries. Thank you very much. And we will move as quickly as possible to reposition to that motion.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Madam Chair, we are in the position to open this up. So, this is the dividing question, part 2, and the voting on that will be open here momentarily.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Excellent. This motion is to amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article XIII, General Conference Executive Committee, Section 1. c., part 2, as found in the Session Agenda. We're on item number 207.

TODD MCFARLAND: Madam Chair, the item is open for voting now.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. Let us go back to the devices. It should say "Next Vote," and this should come up. Item number 207 should come up. We're voting on the motion at this time for the amendment. Please cast your votes and remember to submit. Here we are. The motion carries 90

percent, with 1,436 votes in favor of it. All right. Elder Moorrooven, is it possible that we can gain some momentum?

HENSLEY M MOORROOVEN: Oh, yes, we will do all we can, and we know that you will help us in the house as well. So, we are still on item 207. We are going to the second rationale, and we are now, if you have your document handy, we are on page 44, lines 26 and 27.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Elder Moorrooven, I'm so sorry. We have at microphone number 5 Sandra Colon, point of order, Central California Conference, North American Division.

SANDRA COLON: I'd ask to rescind that; so, no point of order.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you very much. Okay.

HENSLEY M MOORROOVEN: Thank you. What this inclusion seeks to do is to add the executive officers to the list of elected positions that require a quorum of 40 members. If you look at the deleted section here, which is on line 27, you will see that formerly it dealt with presidents of divisions and of general vice presidents.

So now the new sentence will read, "and the election of General Conference president, secretary, treasurer/chief financial officer, and vice presidents." I think this is straightforward. I have moved it, Madam Chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. We have the motion. Is there support for this motion? Yes, we hear the second. All right. Allowing a moment for questions and comments. Kevin Jackson at microphone number 2, South Pacific Division.

KEVIN JACKSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think with the amendment you always have to consider what can go wrong. I think this section should be read now in conjunction with the section that we just voted on the removal of members of the Executive Committee. If I read these two sections correctly together, then I think it could be a possibility that admin staff or union president or union team who may not be fully complied with policy could be removed from Executive Committee membership by

just ten people, being two-thirds of the 15 quorum. I believe that is a possible situation, and I'd just like to ask legal counsel to confirm whether that situation is possible, and if so, I'd like to move a motion of amendment to this action.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. Let's be clear where we are and see if we can get a response. Perhaps we'll need clarification first.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: Kevin, just so I understand, the question is regarding removal, there is a separate section of the Constitution that deals with removal that requires two-thirds vote. This section defines the quorum that is required when removing or electing certain individuals. We're simply adding the General Conference president, secretary, treasurer, and vice presidents, which also includes the division presidents in that category to be in this quorum requirement, to have the higher quorum.

KEVIN JACKSON: So, my question is the two-thirds related to quorum or is it two-thirds of the total Executive Committee overall? Because if it's two-thirds of the quorum, then it's ten people.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: The removal requires two-thirds of the quorum. And, yes, the quorum is based on this number here, yes.

KEVIN JACKSON: Correct. That is my point, Madam Chair. And so, you could have a situation then that there's a quorum called of 15 members, ten members meaning two-thirds of that could vote for removal of a member of the Executive Committee. I believe then it would be appropriate to have removal authority come under the full 40 quorum as opposed to the 15. And so, the motion that I would like to move is that we add an additional sentence under that quorum of 40 that reads "and the removal of a member from the Executive Committee." And so that removal authority happens from the quorum of 40 as opposed to the quorum of 15.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: I think that's already there. The 15 is for routine items. Removal of a member from membership on the Executive Committee is not a routine item, it is a major item.

KEVIN JACKSON: Is that clarified somewhere in policy that that's not a routine item?

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: It says right here. "A quorum of 40 members is required for the disposition of nonroutine items such as major financial decisions, the dismissal of elected and appointed employees, and the election of the General Conference president, secretary, CFO, vice presidents. So, it does require the higher quorum for the removal and also for the election of that class of officers.

KEVIN JACKSON: So, the removal sentence there relates to employees. It doesn't relate to members of the Executive Committee. My suggestion is we include in there specifically the removal of members of the Executive Committee, just for clarity purposes I believe that would be prudent to do. So, I'd like to move that motion, Madam Chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Well, actually we have a motion on the floor, and I suppose you would make that a recommendation for which we would take note but we're waiting to clarify the point. We can come back with further explanation, but the specific recommendation is not germane to the specific point with which we're working right now. But let's be sure that we're all clear on that; so, I'm going to turn to our legal advisors and the undersecretary.

KEVIN JACKSON: Madam Chair perhaps as opposed to a motion.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: This is not germane to what is here. We have taken note of what you have said, and we will listen to other comments in that area, and we will come back to this. That's what I hear the Chair giving us as guidance.

KEVIN JACKSON: I think we're voting on this section as a whole—

ELLA S SIMMONS: We're sorry. Please give the speaker at microphone 2 opportunity once more. We want to achieve some level of clarity on this.

KEVIN JACKSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a point of clarity, I believe we're voting on this section as a whole.

ELLA S SIMMONS: We're voting on the changes to the section.

KEVIN JACKSON: Correct, but in context with the changes that have just been made; so, I would suggest that as an amendment that that would be a valid amendment to suggest. Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: We're going to go to number 2, Jeroen Tuinstra, Belgian-Luxembourg Conference, Inter-European Division.

JEROEN TUINSTRAS: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is just a question of clarification. When we're talking about vice presidents, we do mean the general vice presidents and the presidents of the divisions?

ELLA S SIMMONS: Yes, that was Elder Mooroooven's point. Thank you for that clarity. Yes. Now we go to microphone number 5, Heraldo Lopes, Mozambique Union Mission in the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

HERALDO LOPES: Thanks, Madam Chair. I want to call the question on the motion, please kindly.

ELLA S SIMMONS: I appreciate your offer, but we're at the end of the queue so with your permission, we will just move forward. We're ready to address the action. And if, Brother Todd, you will put this up, we're ready to go with it rather than to pause to take another action, we were already at the end of the queue.

TODD MCFARLAND: Absolutely, Madam Chair, and that is being opened as we speak, and it should be up here momentarily.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. And the motion is to amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article XIII, General Conference Executive Committee, Section 4, as found in the Session Agenda still in item 207. And Brother Mooroooven, if you want to be specific about numbers, feel free to do that.

TODD MCFARLAND: Madam Chair, I'm going to apologize. There has been a slight discrepancy here. The ballot says Section 7, and we're actually Section 4, and that was my mistake; so, what we're

going to do is, we're going to close this ballot. And we're not going to show the results or anything so we're just going to close that. And if you'll give us a little bit of grace here, we will open it back up and we will get the correct one. I apologize, Madam Chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Our God is a God of grace; so how could I do otherwise? So, while we are seated and relaxed and moving, gaining some momentum here, let's just exercise the hands and fingers and arms and elbows and wrists. You notice I'm picking up on some of these moves as I look out there.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Madam Chair. We've got it in the system, and we're opening it up now. And I'll tell you when it is open.

TODD MCFARLAND: Madam Chair, it's open. People can begin voting now.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Please find it in your device, and that one adjustment, Section 7, has been made.

[Voting]

The motion carries 94 percent, 1,365 "yes" votes are carried. Thank you very much. Elder Mooroven, what else do you have in your bag over there?

HENSLEY M MOOROVEN: Oh, we will continue to go to the bag, which is item 207. We now have a third section. And I know that you have your agenda book in front of you, and you have the section which is on the screen. Madam Chair and esteemed delegates, the General Conference Executive Committee meetings are nowadays open to everyone to attend on-site, and they are generally live-streamed. And we have begun that process for some years now. Previously such meetings were regularly held in the different world divisions once per quinquennium. That has been the practice. At the present time, though, with the introduction of electronic meetings, and especially based on what I will tell you now, due to budgetary constraints, these meetings of the General Conference which were previously held once a quinquennium outside the US are mostly held at the GC headquarters. Local conference/mission field presidents were invited to attend when meetings were held in their division

territory. They were extended the privilege, as per the provision of the Constitution, to participate in all discussions of the meeting but without vote. In a desire to treat all the divisions equally and with the ability to observe the meetings virtually as per Article XIII, Section 7 of the Constitution, it is being deleted. So, this motion seeks to remove local conference/mission/field presidents from being invited to attend the Annual Council meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee. If the explanation is clear and rational, I read it for you as part of the document. You have found it; these are the two main reasons. I therefore move this item.

ELLA S SIMMONS: We have the motion. Is there support? Thank you. Hear a second. Again, allowing time for questions and comments. Microphone number 6, Ken Corkum, Seventh-day Adventist Church in Newfoundland and Labrador, North American Division.

KEN CORKUM: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to express my appreciation for the opportunity to having been able to attend the Annual Councils over the last 24 years as a local president in North America. I think it fits very well into the mission concept of the world Church to be able to mingle with world leaders that only takes place there and on this occasion. And it's been a privilege, and I wanted to express my appreciation for that privilege. I think of just about six years ago that we met in Battle Creek at the Adventist location. And how enriching that was to have the privilege of being invited there. Also, I remember turning around and talking to a leader from Papua New Guinea. It's been very much in harmony, I think, with the mission of the Church to have had the opportunity to be at these locations.

While the objective may be that we now can come electronically, I think it takes away from that on-site opportunity. And if it was trying to find equality, I would have suggested that the best avenue would have been to say we want to invite the local division leadership but take away vote and voice. Now we can go by, as guests, but you really don't feel invited. So, I feel disappointed that the

recommendation is going in this direction. But I wanted to express my appreciation for having the opportunity over these last 24 years.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you, brother. And the occasion that you recalled I believe was a special event with special invitations. So those opportunities will remain. We go to microphone number 6, Benjamin Jones, South Central Conference in the North American Division, my previous home conference where I joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a teenager.

BENJAMIN JONES: Thank you, Madam Chair. First, I want to be clear with the removal of this section, are we saying now that all field and conference presidents at this level have access to the Annual Council with voice still and does not necessarily give them permission as invitees? Is that what we're saying?

ELLA S SIMMONS: Elder Mooroooven?

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: What we are saying is there will be no invitation extended to these local conference/mission/field presidents from attending. That's what the motion is.

ELLA S SIMMONS: And this is on a routine basis, as opposed to any special occasion that could arise.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: If there are some of these special occasions, they will be treated as such, indeed.

BENJAMIN JONES: I think that the Church has benefited by the presence of the field leaders of presidents because it allows you to hear directly from the level of the field that deals with the Church members directly. It also gives us an opportunity firsthand to be involved in decision processes and communicate accurately with our people. So, I'm against this motion.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. And we go to microphone number 7, Tim Standish, General Conference.

TIM STANDISH: Thank you again, Madam Chairman. I echo the concerns of those who have already spoken. And I would like to suggest a mechanism that might work to replace the situation that has existed in the past and be more equitable, and that would be because people from every division have the opportunity now to watch, it would probably be too much if everybody was participating in the conversations. However, it is certainly possible, given the technology as we've observed in this meeting, for the local representatives in selected divisions to participate.

Could we please replace this language that is currently there with language that simply says certain divisions at each meeting will have the privilege of participating in the discussions electronically? And I would like to move that. Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: I'm wondering if we should take that as a recommendation, if you would be willing to do that. Because we are looking at whether or not we should delete this item.

TIM STANDISH: Yes, as a recommendation that, if deleted, it be replaced with a mechanism that still allows local input from selected divisions that would be distributed equitably at different times.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay, thank you, Dr. Standish, and we're just verifying that we will receive in the spirit in which you have offered it and process it in the conversations that will engage with the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and perhaps a smaller committee and then hopefully we will see that as we move forward in the next day or next session. But as we move forward, you'll know which way it's going is what I'm saying. Thank you. Going to microphone number 2, Stefan Giuliani, Inter-European Division.

STEFAN GIULIANI: Madam Chair, I'd like to call the previous question.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you very much. And there was a second. We will move to vote. Are you ready? Motion to call the previous question. And as we know, this will be to cease all debate and proceed immediately to voting on the motion, the item on which we are working. So, Let's get our devices, please.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Madam Chair. We are well practiced on this, and it is open for voting now.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. And this is not voting on the motion that we've been discussing but rather to end debate if you say "yes" and return to that motion. If you say "no," the debate will continue.

[Voting]

ELLA S SIMMONS: The motion carries to call the previous question with more than two-thirds at 92 percent. Thank you very much. So now we will return to the item with which we've been working and prepare to take action on that item directly.

Okay. This is another amendment to the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article XIII, General Conference Executive Committee Section 7 as found in the Session Agenda. We're still on item 207 with its many parts that we have divided.

TODD MCFARLAND: Madam Chair, the ballot is open and ready for voting.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. Let us begin. Get your devices, please. Let's get that next vote in. You vote "yes," you're voting in favor of the amendment. If you vote "no," you're rejecting that amendment. Please remember to submit your ballot, your vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Madam Chair. We are closing now. And just got over 1,600 ballots. All right, Madam Chair. It should be displayed here momentarily.

ELLA S SIMMONS: The motion carries with 81 percent, 1,301 votes "yes." Elder Mooroven.

HENSLEY M MOOROVEN: Thank you. We will now hopefully leave 207. There is a last one. But have you noticed something? When you stand up and stretch, this is the time when I sit because I'm always standing and stretching here but it's good to sit every now and then. What is this fourth section under 207 seeking to address? It has happened seldom that during a GC Session like this one we need, Madam Chair, to convene a GC Executive Committee. This section is a rewrite of the portion that has

been stricken through. You can see that the portion that is being deleted, it's a rewrite, just for the sake of being abundantly clear. So, if this were to happen, that is, during a GC Session we need to convene a GC Executive Committee, the notice given during a business session shall constitute notice to all members and all other notice requirements are waived. If you have followed this explanation and it is clear to you, I am ready to move it.

ELLA S SIMMONS: All right. We have the motion. And we have second? Okay. We have several seconds to this. Are there questions or comments? I see no one moving. Let's go to vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Madam Chair. We are opening now.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. This motion is to amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article XIII again, General Conference Executive Committee proposed new—this is new language—Section 7, as found in the Session Agenda item 207.

TODD MCFARLAND: Madam Chair, it is open for balloting. And just as a point of clarification, the proposed new, it is new language, but also refers to proposed new Section 7. We just deleted Section 7 so what was 8, now becomes 7 in the new language in there. So just to be clear, there's a little strikeout there and a 7 in your agenda.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: All right, Madam Chair. We just got under 1,600, and it's closing now, and will be displayed momentarily.

ELLA S SIMMONS: The item carries, with 97 percent, 1,516 votes in favor. Thank you very much. We appreciate this. Now I'm seeing that someone is trying to call a point of order. I'm not sure what's happening with that. As Elder Moorrooven prepares to move to the next item, I will risk going to English Zoom number 101, Melanie Osuri, General Conference.

MELANIE OSURI: Thank you, Madam Chair. My point of order, and you can correct me if I'm wrong on this, is when a motion like the just ended motion, we had an opportunity for anyone who had a comment to make themselves known. But with this hybrid system those who are online, we would

request maybe give it a minute because someone needs to tell the Zoom coordinator, then turn their camera and make sure it flipped right and the lighting is right before they can make their comment. So, the same way we give time for the voting, if there is a motion, would you give it a minute before we go to voting? That's to accommodate the Zoom and those following online instead of just looking at those who are on the floor and those who are moving towards the microphone. There are some who are trying to connect to the Zoom. I hope that's in order.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Sister Melanie, that is in order. That is fine. I have been trying to look, but you are encouraging me to look a little longer; so, I understand.

ELLA S SIMMONS: We won't commit to the legal minute, but we will give it more time. Thank you very much.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: May I proceed?

ELLA S SIMMONS: You may proceed, Elder Mooroooven. Tell me the number. What number are we going to deal with?

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: I know you want to hear the number and its good news for you. Number 208. But number 208 also has a few sections. What are we seeking to do here? Currently our governing document allows for the postponement of a GC Session not to exceed two years. This is already in our governing document. And when we were supposed to meet in 2020, we were not able to do that the first time, we were not able to do that the second time, we were wondering what will happen after these two postponements allowed for by our governing document. Madam Chair, we literally had to think on our feet. Fortunately, and by God's grace we received permission from a special GC Session to include in our governing document now the conducting of a GC Session in an electronic format. So, we have addressed this issue. Should we have any challenge with postponement now, we can convene electronically.

However, Madam Chair, we have not addressed the core of the matter. What do I mean? I do not want to be remembered as a prophet of doom in this GC Session, but imagine technology fails us. Imagine on a worldwide scale if this were to happen, what do we do? Therefore, the committee met, and as I explained to you previously, this has gone through different levels of approval, and there is a recommendation to ensure that the gist of the matter is properly handled. So, I will read this first portion, which is on your screen, and beginning on line 35.

“. . . the General Conference Executive Committee, in regular or special council, shall have authority to make such postponement, not to exceed one year.” I hope you can see it on the screen here. But remember that this is also on your app. So, from two to one year. “This postponement may be reviewed and extended by the General Conference Executive Committee as world conditions necessitate, . . .” Okay? We continue. I am now at line 37. “In the event that the GC Executive Committee exercises its authority to postpone a GC Session,” because that’s the only body allowed to do that, the same Executive Committee “. . . shall also have the authority to set the subsequent regular Session at such a time and place as it shall see fit, not to exceed five calendar years from the date of the postponed Session.” This will give us the latitude to know what to do if there are some circumstances that do not allow us to have a GC Session because the provision is now clear. If it is clear to you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: I’m going to have to intercede again. We have a point of order on microphone number 6, Flaviano Dalisay from Southeastern California Conference in the North American Division. Microphone number 6.

FLAVIANO DALISAY: Thank you. An issue was brought up earlier when discussing an item, the chair mentioned that since it’s not an item of the agenda, it was chosen not to respond to the question. I would like to point out and would like to obtain clarification, if necessary, that even though there is a question to a certain language within a specific section where the amendment is included, as long as a question is part of the specific section on the item in the amendment, it’s a valid part of the discussion

and an appropriate response from the chair is necessary. And we should be allowed to ask why there is no change or suggestion for changes into the specific section provided that the section has been brought up by the chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Brother, I think we're probably of like opinion on that. If a question is for contextual clarity so that you can understand the item that is being brought before you, that's one thing. But many of the questions, comments, and recommendations that have come were not of that type. They were separate and equally weighted items that would require actions of their own. I think we have been very generous in trying to allow time for clarity. But some of these were not for clarity. They were for individual and separate changes.

So, if this chair has erred, this chair always stands to be corrected and there's no problem with that, but the intent is to keep us focused while allowing the expanded opportunities for clarity and understanding before you take action. Thank you.

FLAVIANO DALISAY: Appreciate your response.

ELLA S SIMMONS: We have on microphone—Well, we have several in the queue, but I don't think we have a motion on the floor. Is that correct?

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: No, I did not have time to move—

ELLA S SIMMONS: That's right. We interrupted you.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: —because there was a point of order.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Right?

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Yes. So, do you want me to start again?

ELLA S SIMMONS: You don't have to start over. I believe we have the presentation of the item and you were just at the point of making the motion, I believe.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: I, therefore, move the inclusion of the underlined section and the deletion of 221. It's on the screen here. You can see it, and it has been highlighted. I move it, Madam Chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. Is there support for the motion? We hear some seconds out there. Thank you. And we're looking at the underlined and highlighted section on the screen here. So, with that we're going to move to microphone number 2, Johannes Bochmann, Berlin-Central German Conference, Inter-European Division.

JOHANNES BOCHMANN: Thank you once again, Ma'am Chair. I very much agree with the last part of this amendment that, as I understand it, would bring us in line back to a regular five-year term between Sessions. However, what I am a bit concerned about and where I might ask for some clarification before making any further motions or suggestions is the clause we find in line 36, "as world conditions necessitate." Now, I believe— maybe I'm overlooking something here, but I can't find any kind of time limit that would apply to such an extended postponement. And I do not believe that it is the intent of this motion to postpone a General Conference Session indefinitely. However, I do suggest that we refer this back to committee to clarify and to include some kind of time limit as to how long the Executive Committee shall have the power to postpone such a Session. Because the way it is written here, I believe it could be understood as giving the possibility of postponing indefinitely. So, I'm not only requesting but I move that this is referred back to the Constitutions and Bylaws committee.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you, Brother Johannes. I think you would have to speak in favor of or against the motion that is on the floor. But we have been trying to receive recommendations, not forced action, not even one that requires the exercise of this body in voting, but a recommendation to take something back for consideration. I believe, if I am incorrect, we can take a legal ruling on that, from the parliamentarian and others. And there are several others in the queue. Unless we're going in a different direction, we want to give them an opportunity as well. Okay.

I'm sure you will not allow us to forget this item, is one thing that I'm saying. We don't want it to get lost in the maze, but we do want to hold that thought.

I'm sorry. Perhaps you were trying to respond. And you're at mic number 2, please. And all of the speakers, I think, at least several are at microphone number 2; so, we need that microphone open, please.

JOHANNES BOCHMANN: Madam Chair, I had the impression that either the parliamentarian or the brother whose name I've unfortunately forgotten were indeed trying to respond and to clarify as to whether or not there is a time limit or there is an intent behind this to limit. So, I look forward to hearing that.

ELLA S SIMMONS: If you want that I believe we can actually do that right now, but you took it another step and kind of eliminated where we were going with that. All right. Is there an inferred time limit? What is the thinking here and how do we know?

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Thank you. Thank you very much, Brother Johannes, right?

ELLA S SIMMONS: Yes.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: First of all, I think this will be something that will be reviewed, right? After two years, it can be done once, right? Are you with me here?

ELLA S SIMMONS: Please point this out because they're probably not looking at the item right now. It helps to see exactly where that is included.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: So not to exceed one year. That's the recommendation. It's not after two years but not to exceed one year. Now, you see the problem? As soon as you are descriptive—and we have seen that yesterday or the day before when we were giving examples of frontline—as soon as we are descriptive, whether we like it or not, we are prescriptive and ultimately restrictive. So, there is an intentionality from the group to avoid going that route. But we can ascertain the house here that this

review will be done as what has been said here. And by the GC Executive Committee and as conditions necessitate, and that's the best decision I can give to my brother based on his question.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you very much. Still at microphone number 2, Calvin Drinkall, South New South Wales Conference, South Pacific Division.

CALVIN DRINKALL: Thank you, Madam Chair. The question that I have relates to a similar question that's just been raised and that is around the postponement. You mentioned that it is for one year. That's fine. But on line 38 where it says about the postponement of a Session and then the next line not to exceed five calendar years from the date of the postponed Session. Which one are we actually talking about?

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: We are talking about the 2022 Session, if we were to take the example of this Session.

CALVIN DRINKALL: Okay. So, if we postponed it once, can you postpone it again, as in which one? It's not very clear.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Okay. We would hate to have to do that on the floor, but if ever you have a clearer language, if you have a suggestion, please, you can email it to us, you can come to the committee this afternoon, Room 160, you can share with us better language. Because we would really want it to be clear. And if you believe that there is one word or two words that we can add or subtract to make it clearer, please, we would like to hear from you.

CALVIN DRINKALL: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to take that opportunity, just for clarity and to ensure that it's clear.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Yes. Thank you. We'll go to Michael Worker, microphone number 2, also Australian Union Conference in the South Pacific Division.

MICHAEL WORKER: Thank you, Madam Chair. And we'll take your guidance on the best way to proceed. But I also put that the words "postponed Session" on line 40 are ambiguous and unclear and

need further definition. Contrary to what has been shared, I had understood that the postponed session was not to exceed five years from the time of the originally scheduled Session in 2020. But if the intent is not to exceed five years from the date of the delayed Session in 2022, then we need clarity around that. So, whether we refer it back to the committee or take an amendment on the floor, I will be guided by you but of the understanding that it was intended to be from 2020, I would prepare the words “not to exceed five years from the date of the Session that was postponed,” or, alternatively, “not to exceed five years from the date of the originally scheduled Session.”

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. That is clear. And it appears that we should probably take this back to the committee to clarify these points. We won't agree on any specific language, but we understand your conceptual offering. The bottom line is we need to give some indication of where the parameters are.

MICHAEL WORKER: Yes.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Understand that? Okay.

MICHAEL WORKER: Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. And I believe that goes back to the first speaker, I believe. If we've missed something, we'll be sure to acknowledge that as well. We have at least three speakers on microphone 7. We have said that we want to send this back. If you have something new to add, we will hear you. If not, we would appreciate it if we used the time differently.

The request is that those who wish to speak to this item would not speak on the floor right now but rather would take your suggestions and your observations, even your questions to the committee, and Elder Mooroven can give you guidance on where that can happen.

HENSLEY M MOOROVEN: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. If two delegates have already come to the mic explaining to us that this is not clear enough, I think it's sufficient for us to make it clearer. So, we are willing to study the wording again, and that's what will be done this afternoon at

5:45 p.m. in Room 160. But I thank Brother Michael. He had written to me previously, and we will ensure that the wording that was suggested be also considered. Thank you. Thank you very much, Brother Michael.

ELLA S SIMMONS: We're going to clear the queue and move to the next item. Please see the committee. What is our next item, Elder Mooroooven? And as you are looking at that, I notice that it is 12:07 by my watch. Shortly we should hear from the Nominating Committee, and we will make room for the Nominating Committee report.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Should I proceed? Okay.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Please proceed to our next agenda item.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: This is the second section of item number 208 where we emphasize the security of voting practices. You can see this on the second page of your document, lines 7 to 11. And as you can see here, we are dealing with the election of officers. Is it the pleasure of the chair for me to read the whole section?

ELLA S SIMMONS: We will go on and begin. The Nominating Committee is coming in, but we have a few minutes. And Let's see how far we can progress on this one.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Thank you. So, this is to emphasize security of voting, and as the section stipulates, this is about election of officers. So, the election to any office enumerated in the article provided here and all other voting has been defined by the General Conference *Rules of Order*, period. Voting electronically or by secret ballot must be in a manner that ensures the highest integrity, privacy, and confidentiality as verified by GC Secretariat, GC Auditing Service, in consultation with the General Conference legal counsel. Again, to emphasize, security when voting is involved. Madam Chair, I move this section.

ELLA S SIMMONS: We have the motion before us. Is there support for this motion? I see some hands moving. I don't want to misread. Is there support for this motion? Thank you. All right. We saw

several. Thank you very much. That's clear. All right. Are there questions or comments on this section? We're looking only at Section 5, lines 7 through 11. Is that correct?

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Accurate.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. And we are allowing time for those on Zoom to get in the queue if need be. We have David Trim, General Conference, on microphone number 7.

DAVID TRIM: Thank you, Madam Chair. My concern is about the wording. At the moment it implies that an electronic vote isn't a secret ballot. And I wonder if just a minor form of words could be added, something along the lines of "or by other form of secret ballot." Because I think we assume that electronic votes should be via secret ballot, but this creates an implied contrast.

ELLA S SIMMONS: It is the interpretation of the word "or," I take it.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Noted.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. Noted. All right. We have allowed time for those on Zoom. And scanning again. It appears that we are ready to move to the vote and the action. Let's open.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Madam Chair. This is being opened here momentarily.

ELLA S SIMMONS: This motion is to amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution, Article 5, General Conference Sessions, Section 5 as found in Session Agenda item 208. And we have seen this on the screen.

TODD MCFARLAND: And the ballot is open for this, Madam Chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Excellent. The ballot is open. Let us exercise our voting responsibility and privilege. "Yes" indicates you are voting in favor of this amendment, which is the motion. "No," you are rejecting it. Please remember to submit your vote.

Elder Moorrooven, it appears that we will have a little more time in that. The Nominating Committee is not ready to bring in the forecasted report; so, we will continue with these items until the time to end this session.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. We think we can clear this item and perhaps one other. And I won't dictate which one. But if there's something that can move through in this time left, Let's do that.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: We were even hoping for two more items, not only one.

ELLA S SIMMONS: I like that.

ELLA S SIMMONS: We are closing now. We're ready.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Madam Chair. It is closed. 1,632 people were able to vote and we will display it momentarily. There we are.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. This motion carries with 97 percent voting in favor of with 1,583 votes. Thank you very much. Elder Mooroooven, Let's move quickly to the next item, see what we can do here.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Yes. I will go to the third rationale on your page. And I am on page 47. And we are dealing with the new Section 6 from lines 13 to 14. There is a recommendation to have our minutes of a GC Session approved at the first Annual Council of the GC Executive Committee following a regular or special Session.

I think this is clear and straightforward. This Executive Committee has the delegated authority by a GC Session to do that. We are lumping this Section 14. I know the chairperson will like this. We are lumping Section 6 together with Section 14.

What is Section 14 all about? This section that is being underlined here, already exists. I know you believe me. I have a slide here to show you. But this section already exists in our model Constitution in this Working Policy. So, it has been included here in our model Constitution, the six models that we have. And now we are seeking permission from the house to include the same section in the governing document of the GC. You can read it here, parliamentary authority. What this would also mean, Madam Chair, I don't know if you will recall when the secretary, Brother Erton Kohler, read, we had a section on the *Rules of Order*. If this passes, we will no longer need this action. So, if Section 6 and Section 14 are clear to you, I have moved this item.

ELLA S SIMMONS: We have the motion before us. Is there support for this motion? I see the hands. Thank you. All right. Allowing time for question and comment, I believe someone scanned a badge for microphone number 2, and there was someone at microphone number 8. So, we're going with the first in the queue, Jonathan Zirkle, General Conference, microphone number 8.

JONATHAN ZIRKLE: Is it possible to put the text up? I would just say that it's very dangerous to put the parliamentary rules into the Constitution. One of the things that I've noticed as we've seen this meeting is that there are a lot of things that take place that aren't governed strictly by the General Conference *Rules of Order*. There are subtle traditions that are here that appear to have come from a long tradition of parliamentary rules. And I think it's important that we be flexible and be able to vote on these and change these. The reality is that whoever makes the rules pretty much sets the way the game is played and perhaps has a bigger advantage to win the game. I would strongly recommend that we do not put the General Conference *Rules of Order* into the Constitution. I believe that there's probably some need to be able to amend these as we go, and I think this just makes it too difficult. Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: You're clearly speaking against the motion. Thank you very much. Now we go to microphone number 2, Niklas Rantanen, Finland Union of Churches Conference, Trans-European Division.

NIKLAS RANTANEN: Madam Chair, concerning Section 14, the work of the Session is primarily governed by the Constitution and Bylaws that are amended and approved by this very body. But if we approve the recommendation the work of the Session will also in the future be unconditionally governed by the *Rules of Order* which, however, are not amended by this body but by the General Conference Executive Committee. Thus, the recommendation is a transfer of power from the Session to the Executive Committee. Madam Chair, my question to the Session is why would we tie our own hands like this? Even if we don't approve the recommendation, we can always choose to follow the *Rules of Order* in any one Session as we've done this time. Therefore, I speak against the motion.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you very much. Does anyone care to offer a response?

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: I believe we have heard what our brother has said. We could give the example of making a motion, Madam Chair, this is not something that is in our Constitution and Bylaws but we rely on the *Rules of Order* to conduct the business of the Church in an orderly fashion.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. Microphone number 7, Tim Standish, General Conference.

TIM STANDISH: Thank you. I also stand in opposition to the idea of incorporating the *Rules of Order* into the Constitution for the very reasons that have been stated. So, I would suggest that it is far better for us to do as has been done in the past and as was done at this Session, as has worked perfectly well to vote the *Rules of Order* at the beginning of the General Conference Session and allow any objections at that point. Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you very much. We have Telisha Williams from Guyana Conference in the Inter-American Division on English Zoom number 101. Please speak to us.

TELISHA WILLIAMS: Thank you for the follow up opportunity to speak, Madam Chair. My comment is based on Section 14 on page 47. I'm just seeking clarification on the rationale for that section. My understanding of Constitutions and Bylaws is basically the governing document and everything else falls within that Constitution. However, this seems to imply that the Constitution and Bylaws are silent and there's another document that takes precedence. And it goes contrary to Constitution documents so I'm just seeking clarification, please. Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. Elder Doukmetzian, would you please come and Elder Mooroven please help to clarify that point and any other that you'd like. And I do not see others in the cue.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Thank you very much. My sister on Zoom, we are saying here if we were to add in our Constitution and Bylaws all the provisions that would be required for us to conduct the business of the Church and include all that is required in the *Rules of Order*, it would be a huge document. So, we are saying that wherever there is silence, or something is not covered—and I have

given you an example, a practical example—we will therefore rely on the *Rules of Order*. I don't know if my colleague Karnik would like to complement this response, but that's what I can share with my sister.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Just give some suggestions that there's some legal risks, if you want to at least speak to that.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: Madam Chair, the *Rules of Order* simply assist the body in conducting the meetings. There are modified Robert's *Rules of Order* that are used worldwide, except that Robert's *Rules of Order* are over 900 pages. I'm not sure we want 900 pages of rules. My associate has a copy. It's almost as thick as the *Working Policy*. The intent is to have a simplified set of rules under which we are able to conduct our meetings most effectively for our particular organization. By adopting them and having the provision within our Constitution, it is the same as we have required of every other organization in the Church to say, we're not going to use rules to control our meetings. We're going to be the ones that decide how our meetings are going to be governed, and these are the rules. And to simplify things, we've narrowed this down to 11 or 12 pages of the availability of different motions, the availability of making discussion, and moving forward with the business of the meeting as opposed to getting tied down in procedural wrangles to block any discussion or to move the meeting forward.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Thank you. It appears that we're ready to move to action. So, if we can get the vote ready, please get your devices out.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Madam Chair. It is opening as we speak.

Madam Chair, the ballot is open and ready for voting.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. We are voting on the motion to amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution, Article 5, General Conference sections, prepared new, Sections 6 and 14 as found in the Session Agenda item 208.

TODD MCFARLAND: Madam Chair, we are making good progress. About a thousand people voted. Remind individuals that once the voting has begun, we are not taking further debate or points of order.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Yes.

TODD MCFARLAND. During a vote all we do is exercise our vote. So that is our process. And Madam Chair, I can tell you with a minute 50 left we have 1,348 ballots cast.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Excellent. And while we have not decided to refer this item to committee, if there are questions or comments on any item for your own clarification and for intelligent participation in the business of the Church, remember to go to Room 160 from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. tonight.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: In other words, you should not come to the meeting hungry as we will not have enough food for those who are not a part of the committee.

TODD MCFARLAND: Madam Chair, with a little less than 30 seconds we're at 1,554 votes cast.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Excellent. We will cut it off at zero and try to squeeze in one more quick item. And we have President Mario Brito prepared to offer our closing prayer after those items. Okay.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Madam Chair. We are closed, and 1,587 ballots were cast and we will have it displayed here momentarily.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Excellent. We're ready. The motion carries with 87 percent, 1,386 votes. Elder Mooroven, if we dare risk one that will just take a couple minutes, could you bring that one to us and then we can seal this off and go for lunch.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Yes, we will try this, Madam Chair. I am now on page 48, and we will go to the first item, which would be the Session Committees. You know, whilst you are here, there are several committees that convene at Session. And we are asking for permission from the floor so that these committees may also convene electronically. Just to be clear, now we will have in our document the GC Session can convene electronically and Executive Committee of the GC can convene

electronically and the Committees that meet at Session can also convene electronically. We are just ensuring that everything is aligned and that we are together to be able to conduct the business of the Church and carry on with the mission. I have moved this Section 2 on page 48.

ELLA S SIMMONS: We have the motion. Is there support? We see that support is there, allowing just a little time, as we prepare to wind up our activity for the morning session.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: You have it on your screen here on page 48.

ELLA S SIMMONS: We have on microphone number 2, Niklas Rantanen, Finland Union of Churches Conference, Trans-European Division.

NIKLAS RANTANEN: Madam Chair, my question is if the nominating committee meets electronically, how do we ensure confidence of the discussions? Basically, any online meeting can be streamed online to the whole Web. Is this really what we want?

ELLA S SIMMONS: Is there a response? We have Elder Doukmetzian with us.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: I think we will hear from Brother Karnik on this one.

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN: Well, the Nominating Committee is meeting presently in this format, in electronic format, and lectures were given to the members of the committee and, in addition, every member, in order to participate has signed a Nondisclosure and Confidentiality Agreement. And if they breach that, they are immediately removed from the Committee.

ELLA S SIMMONS: And previously, if I recall correctly, we had an extended conversation, on the need to trust each other. And this is an attempt to do that. But I believe we all have the same question, Brother Niklas. Thank you.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: And Madam Chair I will just add we cannot obviously put here all the guidelines, but we have division secretaries they have received some guidelines whenever their committees have to convene electronically, these are the steps to follow; so, there is an accompanying document that the different Secretariats have received. Thank you.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Are we moving along? Open. Please, Let's open.

TODD MCFARLAND: The parliamentarian doesn't like to open until instructed by the chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: And the chair appreciates that.

TODD MCFARLAND: It is open now, Madam Chair.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Okay. You are voting now on the motion to amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws Article 2, Session Committees as found in the Session Agenda, item 209. And this is to achieve alignment throughout our convening body.

TODD MCFARLAND: I'll just remind everyone that once it's declared open, we are voting, and no motions or comments are in order at that stage.

ELLA S SIMMONS: A few people are drifting out. The votes are coming in. As you move, we want to recognize the beautiful music that is enjoyed at Andrews University on a regular basis with our brother Ken Logan. We thank you.

TODD MCFARLAND: Madam Chair, we have closed the balloting at the appointed time, and will be displayed here momentarily.

ELLA S SIMMONS: Here we are. We've completed this item. It carries with 96 percent, 1,282 votes, still respectable and acceptable to this chair. So, this motion carries.

With this, we will rise to our feet as Mario Brito goes to the microphone to offer our closing prayer. Let us rise together. Thank you for your faithfulness, each one. If all goes well and they don't do what they did to me yesterday, this will be the last time you see me in the chair. I appreciate you. It has been good.

[Prayer by Mario Brito.]