

## NINTH BUSINESS MEETING

*Sixty-First General Conference Session, June 8, 2022, 7:00 p.m.*

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Good evening, my brothers and sisters. We are ready to start our next session. And we have heard a devotional this evening, but I want to ask before we start, I will ask Pastor Evaldino Ramos from the South American Division to open our meeting this evening with prayer in Portuguese. Mic number 1, Pastor Evaldino Ramos.

[Prayer by Evaldino Ramos.]

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Thank you, Pastor Evaldino for your prayer. As we wait a moment, I want to share with you some thoughts related to a chapter for today. This morning I had the opportunity to read Chapter 29 from the book of Numbers. And you know that really is a special chapter which invites us to care for our family worship and to care for our public worship. And you know, we should care for our family worship, we should care for our public worship, but we must never neglect our personal worship. We need personal worship to have a connection with the Lord and to have the way to fulfill the mission with the power of the Holy Spirit. The chapter for today invites us also to abound in doing the Lord's work with a purpose, to help others, but also invites us to always remember that Christ is our only unblemished offering for sin, that only in him our prayers, praises, and offerings are acceptable to God.

Then we should take time to pray, we should take time to study the Bible, we should take time to be in connection with the Lord. And I just want to invite you to continue participating in revival and reformation, continue to participate in studying the Bible every day and giving God the opportunity to transform our lives and to be ready when Jesus comes, because we believe that Jesus is coming soon. I really believe He's coming soon. And we should be ready for his coming.

We will wait a little to initiate with *Church Manual* items. I want to thank all those who have participated with comments. I know we have been taking notes on comments and we are ready to hear you, this is our wish. We want to hear you, and we want to hear the Church. We need to understand that unity in the Church is really a work of the Holy Spirit. And as much as we hear the Holy Spirit's voice in our lives, we can be united. There are differences of opinions, but we should accept that. And we should accept that in the difference of opinions, there are also knowledge, and we can strengthen each other, we can grow each other by God's grace. And we should understand that this Church is us, we are the Church, you are the Church. Every young person, every child in the Church, every lady, every woman and man is really the Church. And we need to have that clear in our hearts. And we need to give the Lord the opportunity to keep us united in the faith. I really love to hear how we can express our differences but keep united in the love of the Lord.

I think we are ready to move ahead with next item related to *Church Manual*, and I want to ask Pastor Gerson Santos to share with us the next item now.

GERSON P SANTOS: Thank you, Pastor Chair. I appreciate your patience. Yes. This afternoon we were talking about membership records. And I'd like to pick up with the following item. The last one, 424, was voted. The next one is 425 in the agenda on page 92. And it's on the screen, as you can see, the reference number is 415-22. The rationale for this amendment is to simplify the language of this section. As you can see on the screen or in your Agenda, page 92, it says, "Church Board Cannot Remove Members—The board may recommend to a business meeting the removal of members, but under no circumstances does the board have the right to take final action, except to record removal at death or at the member's request." And we are deleting the last two lines.

Pastor Chair, to be in accordance with a previous action we just took, I move we accept this recommendation.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: It's moved and seconded. Thank you. Then we have the opportunity to comment. I don't see anyone coming to the mics. I don't see anyone. I think we can vote on this item.

[Voting]

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: The motion is approved with 1,267 votes in favor, 20 against. And now we have our report from the Nominating Committee, and I will ask Pastor, Dr. Cooper to present us the report from the commission.

LOWELL COOPER: Thank you very much, Brother Chair. The Nominating Committee is prepared to present a report to you tonight. But before we deal with that report, I would like to just share a few remarks. There was some uneasiness in the body last night over the processes of selection and recommendation of names for leadership positions at the General Conference. I just wanted to assure the body that the Nominating Committee has asked many of the same questions perhaps more times than they have been asked here. The questions of diversity, the questions of representation, the questions of age, which you cannot ask in the United States, I want the body to understand that in its deliberations, the Nominating Committee has looked at many factors that might be factors that influence a choice. The truth of the matter is that the Nominating Committee cannot take one single factor alone and make that the determining qualification. We look at a number of areas, and in the total mix of all the considerations that are given to try, under God's guidance, to exercise our decision in a way that would bring a recommendation to you.

In the course of our deliberations, we have felt that it would be important that we have some kind of a picture of the demographics in the General Conference. We did not start with this. It may be something that needs to be considered for the future, but we have had a report from the General Conference Human Resources office about some demographics in the General Conference leadership. And we felt it would be helpful to the whole body if Lori Yingling, the Director of the General Conference Human Resources Department, would come and share that brief information with us. Please, Lori.

LORI YINGLING: Good evening, everyone. What I'm going to show you tonight are statistics that we have collected back in 2021. We did not do it for 2022 yet, but these are the most current statistics that I have. So, you'll see some numbers projected on the screen. We first show that currently in the General Conference we have over 60 countries that are represented by our employee base. In the entire building, which represents other institutions, we have 76 countries that are represented. Every Division is represented in our positions within the General Conference.

We have also captured ethnicity for you. Now, this is by job categories. And in the United States, all jobs are categorized for the federal government. And so, what we did for the Nominating Committee is we put together what we considered to be most of our exempt, appointed, and elected positions that are held. So, as you see, this is the ethnicity by job category of executive, professional, and managerial type positions.

Asians are 9 percent of those categories, Black or African-American are 16 percent, Latino or Hispanic are 17 percent, two or more races, 3 percent; and White or Caucasian is 55%. When we looked at gender by those same job categories, women represent 38 percent of those responsibilities, men represent 62 percent. And then the last one we were asked to look at is the average age within those three categories of executive, professional, and managerial. And that average age is 54. When we broke it down further and we looked at only positions that are elected positions, the average age is 60. And those are the demographics that I have to report to you tonight.

LOWELL COOPER: Thank you, Brother Chair. We bring this information just as information. It's not a matter for discussion or for approval. But it may help the delegates have a backdrop of understanding for what goes on here at a General Conference Session in terms of elections.

LOWELL COOPER: Now, as to reports from the Nominating Committee, we would like to bring reports to the body tonight for the leadership roles of Division Secretary and Division Treasurer. And we will ask that report to be presented to us by our Secretary, Magdiel Perez Schulz. After we deal with

those recommendations, we are proposing that it be voted as a block, because the Division Caucuses on the Nominating Committee have already processed these recommendations before bringing them to the Nominating Committee. So, they've been through a couple of areas of review, and we trust that the body would be prepared to adopt the report as a whole. After that presentation, we would like to have an opportunity for the Division Secretaries to be invited for a photo-op. Following that, the Division Treasurers for a photo-op. And then the second report for this evening will be the General Conference Department Associate Directors. Our Associate Secretary on the Nominating Committee, Cheryl Chavers, will present that report when we come to that. We'll ask Pastor Magdiel to deal with the presentation of the recommendations for Division officers, the positions of Secretary and Treasurer.

MAGDIEL PEREZ SCHULZ: Thank you, Pastor Cooper. We are ready to present to you the Nominating Committee report number 10. And we will do it in the following way. We will name the Secretary and the Treasurer together, and then we go on to the next Division.

For the position of East-Central Africa Division Secretary, we're bringing the name of Musa Mitekaro, currently serving as Ministerial Association Secretary and Family Ministries Director of the East-Central Africa Division; and for the position of East-Central Africa Division Treasurer, we're bringing the incumbent Pastor Jerome Habimana.

For the position of Secretary of the Euro-Asia Division, the incumbent Victor Alyksyeyenko; and for the position of Euro-Asia Division Treasurer, the incumbent Vladimir Tkachuk. We remind each one of you that, as we voted in an earlier report, the three officers of the Euro-Asia Division will be in their positions until Annual Council this year when the Euro-Asia Division territory as we know it right now will be restudied.

For the position of Inter-American Division Secretary, the incumbent Pastor Leonard Johnson; and for the position of Inter-American Division Treasurer, the incumbent Pastor Filiberto Verusco.

For the position of Inter-European Division Secretary, we're bringing the name of Pastor Barna Magyarosi, incumbent; and for the position of Inter-European Treasurer, we're bringing the name of Norbert Zens, who is the incumbent.

For the position of North American Division Secretary, we're bringing the name of the incumbent Pastor Kyoshin Ahn; and for the position of North American Division Treasurer, we're also bringing the name of the incumbent, Pastor Randy Robinson.

For the position of Northern Asia-Pacific Division Secretary, we're bringing the name of Pastor Hiroshi Yamaki currently serving as Health Ministries Director of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division; and for the position of Northern Asia-Pacific Division Treasurer, we're bringing the name of the incumbent, Joel Tompkins.

For the position of Southern Asia Division Secretary, we're proposing the name of C H John Victor, currently serving as president of the East-Central India Union at the Southern Asia Division; and for the position of Southern Asia Division Treasurer, we're bringing the name of Regis Christian, currently serving as Assistant to the Treasurer of the Southern Asia Division.

For the position of Southern Asia-Pacific Division Secretary, we're bringing the name of Wendell Mandolang, currently serving as Ministerial Secretary, Chaplaincy Director of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division; and for the position of Southern Asia-Pacific Division Treasurer, we're bringing the name of Jacinth Adap, currently serving as Undertreasurer of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

For the position of Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, we're bringing the name of the incumbent Pastor Gideon Reyneke; and for the position of Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division Treasurer, we are also bringing the name of the incumbent, Hopkins Ngomba.

For the position of South Pacific Division Secretary, we're bringing the name of the incumbent, Pastor Michael Sikuri; and for the position of South Pacific Division Treasurer, we're also bringing the name of the incumbent, François Keet.

For the position of Trans-European Division Secretary, we're bringing the name of Robert Csizmadia, currently serving as President of the Duna Conference in the Trans-European Division; and for the position of Trans-European Division Treasurer, we're bringing the name of the incumbent, Nenad Jepuranovic.

For the position of West-Central Africa Division Secretary, the name that's being brought is Pastor Selom Kwasi Sessou, currently serving as Assistant Secretary of the West-Central Africa Division; and for the position of West-Central Africa Division Treasurer, we're bringing the name of Markus Musa Dangana, currently serving as the Treasurer of the Northern Nigeria Union Conference in the West-Central Africa Division. I move this report, Pastor Chair.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Then the ballot is now open.

[Voting]

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: There is the decision, 1,473 votes "yes," 55 votes "no." The motion carries. [Applause.]

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Yes. Mic number 1, Elieser Ramos.

ELIESER RAMOS: Good evening. I think a name is missing from the South America Division.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Yes. Thank you. You are right. Could you include the names?

MAGDIEL PEREZ SCHULZ: For the position of South American Division Secretary, Pastor Edward Heidinger; and for the position of the South American Division Treasurer, the name of Pastor Marlon Lopes.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Then it's moved and seconded. I see someone at mic number 4, Abraham Dalu.

ABRAHAM DALU: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have any objection with the names presented. However, I want to raise still a concern that has been repeatedly presented. I don't see from all the Divisions, all the three main officers, I don't see a single female. Thank you.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: We have someone in mic from English Zoom, Bhaju Shrestha, the Himalayan Section, SUD.

BHAJU SHRESTHA: I like to really thank the conference nominating people that are willing to work for God as we stay together as one Church, one family. And I thank all those who are outgoing and who have done the best for the Church, for the Division and also for our country. And I like to wish the new people to work together, not separate, work together for unity of Jesus. I like to thank General Conference for working very hard to give us the direction of which way to go towards our Jesus. May God bless you. May God's spirit, Holy Spirit, be empowered, so that we keep Jesus Christ our object. We are the body of Christ, not body of different people. May God bless you. Continue to do the ministry. We are happy willing to work for God in the mission in the Church. I wish and I pray for God's Holy Spirit and unity. So may we all work together for one end, one goal in Jesus name, Amen.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: I have someone at mic number 5, Debbie Jackson from Central States Conference, North American Division.

DEBBIE JACKSON: I'd like to congratulate all of those who were nominated and were elected. I do have a question for you. You said that several factors go in to picking these folks. Is one of those factors that they have to be ordained to serve as either Secretary or Treasurer?

LOWELL COOPER: Thank you, Brother Chair. I thank you for the question. That is not a requirement in the job description at present. The expectation of an ordained minister credential is for the president.

DEBBIE JACKSON: Okay. I guess and I will just make this statement, I continually wonder why we cannot get younger people or females on these committees. So, again, I was just searching for a reason.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Thank you. Thank you for your comments.

LOWELL COOPER: Thank you, Brother Chair. Perhaps we can proceed with the second part of our reporting session to the body tonight. And this represents the Nominating Committee



recommendations for the Associate Directors of departments at the General Conference. Our Associate Secretary, Cheryl Chavers, will present those recommendations.

CHERYL CHAVERS: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to present to you Nominating Committee report number 11.

For the position of General Conference Communications Associate Director, Samuel Neves, currently serving as Associate Director of Communications, General Conference.

For the position of General Conference Education Associate Director, we have the incumbent, Hudson Kibuuka.

For the position of General Conference Education Associate Director, we have the incumbent John Taylor.

For the position of General Conference Education Associate Director, we have Julian Melgosa, currently serving as Associate Director, Education, General Conference.

For the position of General Conference Education Associate Director we have Richard Apelles Sabuin, currently serving as Director of Education, Northern Asia-Pacific Division.

For the position of General Conference Health Ministries Associate Director, we have the incumbent, Zeno Charles-Marcel.

For the position of General Conference Health Ministries Associate Director, we have the incumbent, Katia Reinert.

For the position of General Conference Health Ministries Associate Director, we have the incumbent, Torben Bergland.

For the position of Ministerial Association Associate Secretary, Editor *Ministry*, we have the incumbent, Pavel Goia.

For the position of General Conference Ministerial Association Associate Secretary, Editor *Ministry*, Jeffrey Brown, the incumbent.

For the position of General Conference Ministerial Association Associate Secretary for Evangelism, we have the incumbent, Robert Costa.

For the position of Ministerial Association Associate Secretary, Editor *Elders Digest*, we have the incumbent, Anthony Kent.

For the position of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Associate Director, we have the incumbent, Jennifer Woods.

For the position Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Associate Director, Nelu Burcea, the incumbent.

For the position of Planned Giving and Trust Services Associate Director, Scott Koppock, incumbent.

For the position of Publishing Ministries Associate Director, Steven Apola, incumbent.

For the position of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Associate Director, Justin Kim, currently serving as Assistant Director for Sabbath School and Personal Ministries, General Conference.

For the position of Stewardship Ministries Associate Director, Eric Barb, incumbent.

For the position of Women's Ministries Associate Director, Nilde Itin, currently serving as administrative secretary to Presidential of the General Conference.

For the position Youth Ministries Associate Director, Pako Mokgwane, incumbent.

For the position Youth Ministries Associate Director, Pathfinders and Adventurers, Andres Peralta, incumbent.

Mr. Chair, I would like to move this report.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: It's moved. And it's seconded. I don't see anyone coming to the mics. I think we can vote now.

[Voting]

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: We have our decision. 1,471 "yes," 25 "no." The motion carries.

LOWELL COOPER: Thank you, Brother Chair. The Nominating Committee has one more report to bring, but not to the Session. That report concerns the membership of the General Conference Corporation Board. The Nominating Committee has already completed its recommendations for that board, and that report will be brought to the General Conference Corporation Member Meeting, which I believe takes place tomorrow. I am pleased to report to you that with the acceptance of these reports this evening, the Nominating Committee has completed its work for this Session. [Applause.] We have brought to the Session names to fill 140 positions.

And perhaps a little bit of the demographics or a little bit of information about the Nominating Committee itself, our technical team that has served us in such an excellent way had a calibration each day for the Nominating Committee because our voting took place on a different ElectionBuddy platform than you were using here. And one of the questions that was asked on the first day of the Nominating Committee—268 members, about 248 in person and 20 via Zoom—the question was asked, “Is this the first time you were serving on a General Conference Session Nominating Committee?” I think we were all surprised when we learned the result. Sixty-three percent of that group was serving for the first time on a Nominating Committee. Had we known that in advance, I think it would have suggested to us that we needed to spend more time in an orientation session for the Nominating Committee itself, because it does take a little bit of time to get used to the traditions and the patterns that have been used in the past. I'm pleased to report to you that we learned how to work as a group. Another question that was asked in a calibration question was, “How many are employees of the Church.” And the result of that was 81 percent. The third calibration question was, How many have attended an Adventist school at some period in their education. And once again, it was 81 percent.

So, Brother Chairman, the Nominating Committee has effectively completed its work except for the report that comes to the Corporation Board Meeting, and the Nominating Committee thanks the

Session for entrusting the members of the Nominating Committee with the task of recommending names for the 140 leadership positions. Thank you, Brother Chair.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Thank you. Thank you, Elder Cooper for sharing this information. And I think we can express our thankfulness to all the members of the Nominating Committee. And thank you to all of you who have been working so hard to complete these reports. So, now, let's move ahead with our *Church Manual* items.

GERSON P SANTOS: Thank you, Pastor Chair, and I'd like to take the moment to remind you that we left behind a couple of items, so I'd like to suggest first to go back again to 419. In your Agenda, look at number 419, which is on page 80. And the reference number is 430 as it appears on the screen. And several times we heard today and yesterday about the importance of attending to the needs of the whole Church and serving the community in a proper way and being effective as we meet the needs of the community and integrate different groups of the people. And this is an initiative from the General Conference to establish a totally new service or to reformat one of the ministries as it is being called Adventist Possibility Ministries. And the rationale is this; addition to the *Church Manual* emphasizes the importance of including all church members in ministry. So, the purpose is not just to attend to the special needs of certain groups of people but it's also to empower this group that may have special needs to be engaged in ministry. So, it's twofold—not only to meet the needs, but to equip and empower people for ministry.

So, it is recommended to add the new section, Adventist Possibility Ministry, in Chapter 8 of the *Church Manual* where you have Church Officers and Organizations following Departmental Structure and Other Organizations, on page 87. I believe many of you have read this document. It is an outstanding document. It took a couple of years. You're going to be amazed when you hear some of the details of this recommendation. But “The Adventist Possibility Ministries” as it's stated here in the first paragraph, “initiative was established to extend the compassionate and inclusive ministry of Jesus, and

seeks to inspire, equip, and mobilize those with special needs and those who are deaf.” In the second paragraph you see, “All are in search of wholeness.” And they need to be treated with dignity regardless of any limitation they may have. So, this global initiative encompasses a ministry for those with special needs and the deaf, along with seeking opportunities to minister with them. You noticed that, right? Not just ministry to them, but ministry with them.

On the next paragraph you'll see on the third paragraph on page 80 the following statement of Ellen White that “underscores the importance of this work.” “I saw that it is in the providence of God that widows and orphans, the blind, the Deaf, the lame, and persons afflicted in a variety of ways, have been placed in close Christian relationship to His church; it is to prove His people and develop their true character. Angels of God are watching to see how we treat these persons who need our sympathy, love, and disinterested benevolence. This is God's test of our character.” It came to my mind, Brother Chair, yesterday I was talking for just a couple minutes with a young lady working in our hotel. I know most of you don't have breakfast in your hotel, but in ours we do have, and the lady serves us every day, she's pregnant and in the last few weeks, and she's working hard, I believe before four in the morning because they start serving at six. And I saw in that young lady a person that needs some special support. For those kinds of people, not only people that are physically challenged but emotionally, socially, and any other kind of stress, this is why this ministry has been organized.

In the following paragraph it says, “The Deaf as a Unique Culture,” and you see that we put it in a separate category because that's their request. It's not that we are labeling them that way. It's not a suggestion from the committee. This came from the exact people that now we are describing in this paragraph. They are internationally recognized as having their own set of social beliefs, behaviors, art, history, literature, traditions, values, languages, just as other cultures. It is recommended that the board appoint a local Possibility Ministries leader. While it is preferable for the leader to have direct experience or education with Possibility Ministries, it is not mandatory. It is best if the leadership for this

ministry is chosen from within the groups they represent. So, it is an opportunity to engage people with special needs in leadership positions.

And the last paragraph talks about the committee. "The church board should establish a committee for possibility ministries to encourage members with special needs and to learn how to effectively communicate with them. It should create witnessing programs, recommend how to make church facilities more accessible, help solve transportation problems [programs], and recommend ways to assist in the discovery of roles or ministries that bring a sense of meaning and fulfillment. The committee is chaired by the possibility ministries Leader or leader(s). If not serving as the chairperson, the pastor should be an ex-officio member." And you can also see resources for possibility ministries in notes #9 in the *Church Manual*. Brother Chair, this is an outstanding initiative. I feel a privilege at this moment to move we accept the recommendation.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: It is moved to accept this recommendation and seconded. I see that in mic number 5 is Diane Thurber from North American Division. I want to ask you to please speak, Sister Diane.

DIANE THURBER: Thank you. I stand in support of this motion as an advocate for people who are blind through my work with Christian Record Services and as a member of the General Conference Adventist Possibility Ministries Advisory and Task Force for the Blind. I can attest that this is a very important addition to the *Church Manual*, as are the guidelines it contains for our churches.

I would also like to commend Elder Larry Evans for his leadership of the GC Adventist Possibilities Ministries movement. It was through the world Church and his and the committee's work that this addition to the *Church Manual* is brought to the body today. Adding this section to the *Church Manual* will raise awareness and help to ensure there is representation at the local church for anyone with a visible or hidden disability who may need accommodation and for someone who is deaf, but even more important, we as a Church will learn more about how to include all of God's children who desire to

help advance the mission of our Church. The body of Christ is not complete without these brothers and sisters. And often we are missing out on some wonderful people who God treasures and has also gifted for such a time as this. Jesus' ministry modeled extending love, acceptance, and value to each marginalized person He encountered. If we want to completely extend His love and ministry here on earth, we must follow His lead and more intentionally welcome and include all of God's children more fully in the life and the mission of our Church. I strongly urge the delegates to vote in support of this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Thank you. Thank you, Sister Diane. And now we have at mic number 2 Patrick Johnson, Trans-European Division. Please.

PATRICK JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to commend the committee for including this in the *Church Manual*. It's been a long time in coming, and we're very happy that this is here. I would like to make a couple of comments on the paragraph entitled Adventist Possibilities Ministry Leader. I think the first couple of sentences are good. I think it's recommended the board appoint a local Possibilities Ministry Leader. While it is preferable for the leader to have direct experience or education with Possibility Ministries, it's not mandatory. Those are good sentences, I think.

The next few, though, I think they're too prescriptive, and lines 1-5 should be left out and we should skip straight to, "It is, however, imperative for the leader to be compassionate," et cetera. Those other ones I think are too prescriptive. Then also on the Adventist Possibility Ministries Committee—so that's the next paragraph, that's lines 8 and onwards on page 81—I would say instead of saying "it should create witnessing programs," "it should, for example, create," because otherwise people just look at this and say, this is all that they need to do, and it's a whole lot more than what's written here. Put, "for example," those things and then hopefully people will think it's much more expansive. But thank you very much for including this.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Thank you for your comments, Brother Patrick. Then we have at mic number 8 Pastor Larry Evans from the General Conference, who has worked hard on with this document.

LARRY EVANS: We are very excited about seeing this being developed here for the world Church. People, whether they can speak or see or hear, walk, whether they're orphans or vulnerable children, whether they're widows or widowed, whether they are caregivers, all of those groups fall within this special ministry. I am so pleased to hear Diane Thurber speak about the unique relationship of Possibility Ministries and Christian Record Services. We are working together globally, and it is a wonderful partnership that we have. We're happy to say that we now have just completed, just about two weeks ago, the Adventist Learning Community platform that is actually by the North American Division. We now have an online course designed to help every local church in four different languages, English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, as well as American Sign Language with videos and classes to help the local church train its members for this special ministry. We really believe that God will bless this kind of compassion and its inclusiveness for the world Church. Right now, more than half of the Divisions have this implemented at the local church, conference, union, and division levels.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Thank you, Pastor Larry. Now we have Geoffrey Jordan in mic number 8.

GEOFFREY JORDAN: Yes. I wanted to let you know I am using American Sign Language because I am deaf, and I have a voice interpreter that you are hearing me now, the one who's speaking for me right now is Noey. The other interpreter is still interpreting, but I wanted to let you know that as I look around this room, this is the first time that I have been here as a delegate. I have been greatly impressed by the diversity that I've seen, men and women from the global platform, everyone here, race different, people that are here on the floor. There are millions and many, many people that are deaf that are not yet represented. I'm happy to be the representative as a deaf individual here on the floor. But we are



supporting this motion, this part of the *Church Manual*, to be more inclusive of the deaf and blind and those who are people that are on the list that you have read. And each person who has a possibility that God can use, so I wanted to give my support in favor of this motion.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Thank you. Thank you, Brother Jordan, for your comments. We have Martin Altink in mic number 2, North German Union Conference, EUD.

MARTIN ALTINK: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. That was a great statement from the speaker before me. And it is great to have something like this in our *Church Manual* finally, I would say, but only the start of something which can be much bigger. And I believe the world is watching us on how we treat each other, including people with special needs. And when we treat each other well, we as a Church will grow and our motto will be there, "Jesus is coming." Please get involved also in this ministry. I support this motion.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Thank you. Thank you, Brother Martin for your words. Now we have mic number 5, Passmore Mulambo, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

PASSMORE MULAMBO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to add my voice in supporting the motion. It's a great, great direction the Church is taking to include this part in our *Church Manual*. And I would also like to thank the teams that have been working with Elder Larry Evans to ensure that we've reached where we are today.

Now, just a little observation on the committee. Maybe it could be considered for either editorial or for future, where we are talking about the chairperson for the committee. My view or suggestion is that we could include the elder in charge since we are putting it there in the *Church Manual*. It would be like any other department we have, and in the local church we have an elder in charge of departments to be chaired by the elder in charge of that department, something to strengthen that part in our *Church Manual*. I want to say thank you very much, and I am here to support the motion. Thank you.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Thank you. Thank you so much, Brother Passmore. Then we have Yusuph Zegge from South-East Tanzania via English Zoom. Go ahead, brother.

YUSUPH ZEGGE: My observation is that we've left out the use of our electronic membership record system. We have been promoting this Adventist Church Management System, but in our amendment, this has been left out. So, I compliment your work. Thank you very much.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Thank you for your comments. Now we have in mic number 3, Musa Nzumbi, North-East Tanzania Conference.

MUSA NZUMBI: Thank you, Pastor Chair. I'd like to support this motion and appreciate the world Church creating Adventist Possibility Ministries and including this in the *Church Manual*.

I would like just to suggest, if it is possible, in the division, union, and conference levels to have a special report. For instance, in my conference we have a special book for reports of the departments and ministries so we can see the effectiveness of the department. In this way, the coordinator, or the responsible person, can work and feel they have something to be evaluated by. We also have secondary schools, primary schools, hospitals and other entities. It is my suggestion that we include them also so that they can be part of the work of the mission. Thank you.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Thank you. Thank you, brother Musa. Now we have in mic number 1 Paullina Villalon Alvarez, Chile Union Mission.

PAULLINA VILLALON ALVAREZ: As an individual that works in the area of special needs education, I am very happy, and I congratulate the Church for this motion. But I believe it's also important to consider that we must educate our Church regarding this topic. All ministries, all those who are greeting at church, Children's Ministries, Pathfinders, Adventurers, and all the other ministries that deal directly with people, should be trained since this is a ministry that is just beginning, and we hope that it will work the best way possible so we can reach those people who have special needs. I am very happy, and I pray that it will work the best way.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Thank you, Sister Paullina. [Speaking Spanish.] Now we have Bhaju Shrestha, English Zoom, Himalayan Section SUD.

BHAJU SHRESTHA: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank you for taking a special need, understanding that need. I am deaf. I cannot hear. I have a hearing aid to listen to what's going on. I miss lots of wonderful presentations. Could you please have closed captions on the screen whenever presentations are going on? That's my humble request so I can read what is happening, what people are saying. Thank you very much. God bless you.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Thank you. Thank you for your suggestion. Now we have LaTonya Jackson of North American Division, mic number 6.

LATONYA JACKSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to affirm the motion. I work in corporate America. My field of professionalism would be human resources. And it brought me so much pleasure to be able to hear about Possibility Ministries. Most of the time, when we interview applicants for positions, there is an essential job function that someone must be able to complete in order to be placed in a job. And I'm happy that the God we serve, the only essential job function needed is to be willing. And for us to make any changes within the Church, it has to be intentional. And so, this is a wonderful, intentional idea to include everybody and not just make accommodations for someone who has a disability to enter a church or be able to use the restroom but to actually get involved because Jesus is coming. I would like to call for the question, and let's vote.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Call for the question, then we need to open the ballot and vote "yes" or "no."

[Voting]

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: The motion carried, so let's move to the initial motion.

[Voting]

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: The main motion carried. Thank you. Let's move ahead, Pastor Gerson, to present the next item, please.

GERSON P SANTOS: It's good to hear that it's the last item for today. We have a special gift for you, and it is related to item number 427, so let's go there. This is our last item for today, item 427. It's on the screen. The reference number is 424.

The rationale behind this recommendation is this new section on redemptive membership auditing is being added as a recommendation of the Nurture and Retention Committee of the General Conference, and it is recommended to add a totally new section, "Redemptive Membership Auditing" to the *Church Manual* on Chapter 6 in the section of Membership, following Membership Record on page 55. And this is what we have. "Redemptive Membership Auditing—Membership records are kept up to date by the local church. They are subject to audit by the next higher organization. This rule, which also applies to every entity or level of the organization, provides the maximum privacy of members' personal information and shall comply with legal requirements. In the Bible we find the words, 'Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as it is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.' There is great need to seek for those who are far away, and Ellen White says, 'If the lost sheep is not brought back to the fold, it wanders until it perishes, and many souls go down to ruin for want of a hand stretched out to save.' It is a most needed ministry to review the membership records and to approach this exercise in a Christ-like redemptive way." And this is why, Pastor Chair, we are recommending this body to accept the recommendation brought by the *Church Manual* Committee. I move this Mr. Chair.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: It's moved and seconded? I see in mic number 7, David Trim.

DAVID TRIM: Brother Chairman, thank you. I strongly support this addition to the *Church Manual*, but I'd like to propose one minor change that I hope the Chair and Secretary might accept as a minor editorial change, or, if not, that it could be sent back to the committee tomorrow. My suggested

edit is to change Redemptive Membership Audit to Redemptive Membership Review. That comes out of the work of a Secretariat task force in the months since this was approved at Annual Council. We have decided that the term “audit” is too intimidating for many people, has negative connotations, and we'd like to change what we currently call “membership audit” to “membership review” and indeed to “redemptive membership review.” So, I would request that that change be made, or that it be taken to the *Church Manual* Committee tomorrow, but I strongly support the intent and, overall, what's being done.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Thank you. Thank you for your comment. We will take your request and then we will take this item back to the *Church Manual* Committee, and then we will bring it back tomorrow.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: Okay. Now are the gifts ready?

GERSON P SANTOS: Yes, it is, Mr. Chair. Ready to be given away.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS: I want to ask Pastor Elbert Kuhn if you can pray, please, and then we will be ready to close our meeting this evening, and we invite you to be on time tomorrow morning and ready to participate in the decisions we have for tomorrow, the items for tomorrow.

[Prayer by Elbert Kuhn.]