

## EIGHTH BUSINESS MEETING

*Sixty-First General Conference Session, June 8, 2022, 2:00 p.m.*

THOMAS L LEMON: Well, good afternoon. I trust you had a good lunch as we are coming back together this afternoon to start our business. A little different business for a little while this afternoon. But before we start our meeting, I've asked Brother Norbert Zens the Treasurer of our Inter-European Division to begin our meeting with prayer. Thank You, Elder Zens. Microphone number 2.

[Opening Prayer by Norbert Zens.]

THOMAS L LEMON: Thank you, Elder Zens. And thanks to all of you who have come back from lunch. We are entering into the official Session of the General Conference Corporation. We are meeting as members of the General Conference Corporation, and I'm turning to our Secretary, Daisy Orion, to tell us more about this meeting. Daisy, please.

DAISY J ORION: Thank you, Pastor Chair. This is a meeting of members that's required by the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. On the screen it says in Article VIII of the Articles of Incorporation that "The delegates to the regular Session of the General Conference shall serve as the members of this Corporation for the duration of this Session."

THOMAS L LEMON: So, all of those named delegates to this General Conference are members of the General Conference Corporation. That's all of you.

DAISY J ORION: That's correct, Pastor Chair.

THOMAS L LEMON: Madam Secretary, did we send out the required notices to our members?

DAISY J ORION: Yes, Pastor Chair, notices have been sent. Article II, section 3 states that "Notice of both regular and essentially called meetings conducted at the time of General Conference Session shall be published not less than ten days and not more than 50 days preceding the time of meeting in the *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World* magazines published at Silver Spring, Maryland." Pastor Chair,

the following notice appeared on page 4 of the *Adventist Review* May issue and page 7 of the *Adventist World* May issue. It says, "Notice is hereby given that the next regular meeting of the members of the General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists will be held in the Dome of America's Center in St Louis, Missouri, in the United States of America on Wednesday, June 8, 2022, at two o'clock p.m. for the transaction of any business that may come before the meeting. The members of this Corporation are the delegates to the 61st Session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists." Pastor Chair, this is how the notices appeared in the two magazines. It's marked with a check, a red checkmark.

THOMAS L LEMON: Madam Secretary, what is the quorum required for this meeting, and do we have one?

DAISY J ORION: Pastor Chair, the quorum as prescribed by our bylaws is 75. We have more than 75 present for this meeting, thus we have a quorum.

THOMAS L LEMON: So, we are officially convened here. What is the main transaction that we need to bring before this body today?

DAISY J ORION: Pastor Chair, we need to elect the Board of Directors of the Corporation as prescribed in Article IX of the Bylaws. Article IX says "The Corporation's activities and affairs shall be managed and all corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall be elected by the members of the Corporation at a regular or specially called Session of the General Conference and shall serve until the next regular Session. The President of the General Conference shall be the chairperson of the Board of Directors. The members of the Board of Directors shall have full power and authority to elect any additional officers on the board. The authorized number of directors and quorum shall be provided for in the Bylaws." And in the Bylaws, Article III, Section 2 says, "The number of directors has been at least 15 and no more than 19. All directors have been members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in regular standing." Pastor Chair, as we have read, we have to elect 15 to 19 members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation and we

need to do it through a Nominating Committee. Pastor Chair, I move that we appoint the 61st General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Session Nominating Committee to nominate the members of the Corporation's Board of Directors.

THOMAS L LEMON: Thank you. That was a motion. I'm looking for support for a second. I've heard that. So, the motion appears on the screen. We have to ask the Nominating Committee to appoint the Directors. I turn to our parliamentarian for voting instructions.

TODD MCFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be by ElectionBuddy.

THOMAS L LEMON: Okay. We'll start the timer. Please vote. Your device should be in good shape after an hour off for lunch. And we'll give you a countdown as to how we're doing. And the afternoon ahead of us promises to be full and interesting and nobody, even if you ate a whole lot, is going to be sleepy this afternoon I don't think.

THOMAS L LEMON: Okay. The motion to refer the nomination of the Board of Directors for the Corporation passes by a vote of 1,106 votes "yes" and 9 votes "no." That motion is carried. Is there any other item that we need to consider, Sister Secretary?

DAISY J ORION: Yes, Pastor Chair, we need to reconvene the members of the Corporation to receive the report of the Nominating Committee and eventually elect the Board of Directors. Therefore, I move, Pastor Chair, to adjourn the members meeting of the General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists to Thursday, June 9, at two o'clock p.m.

THOMAS L LEMON: So, we have a motion to reconvene the Corporation Membership tomorrow at two o'clock when we will hear the report of the Nominating Committee with regard to those who have been selected for us to process here as the Board of Directors. Do I have support for that motion? Yes, I do. Thank you very much. Since this is just by common consent, we will come back together tomorrow at two o'clock to hear this report and process it forward. So, I do believe, if I'm not wrong, we

are done now. Thank you. If you can smile, I can smile and we can move forward. Thank you so much. We'll proceed back, then, to the business of the Session and we'll turn to another person to chair that.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much for coming. I see people walking in. And we had our opening prayer already. We'll count it as ours also and we have a partial report from the Nominating Committee.

LOWELL COOPER: Thank you, Brother Chair. The Nominating Committee wishes to bring to the body today the recommendations for the positions of division president. Before we present the list of recommendations, perhaps it would be advantageous if we made sure there was a common understanding of how this selection process occurs. Every division has selected a group of its delegates to serve on the Nominating Committee. We have asked those groups of delegates to meet individually in a forum we call the division caucus. That group met under the facilitating work of a General Conference vice president or administrator to process the thoughts of the division team, the division nominating committee caucus concerning a leadership position of the president. These recommendations from the 13 caucuses have come back to the Nominating Committee, and the Nominating Committee has approved them and brings them as nominations here. The Nominating Committee did not feel obligated to enter into a particular discussion on any one name because the name has come from the division caucus. And so, in the presentation of the report and the voting today, the invitation to the body will be to respond to the entire report with one vote, recognizing that the division caucuses and perhaps division delegations by now already have information about that.

In the reporting, there will be one division for which the Nominating Committee brings not the recommendation of a name, and when the report is presented, you will immediately understand the situation. So, Brother Chair, with that we'll ask our secretary and associate secretary to read through the names for the position of division president.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, please.

MAGDIEL PEREZ SCHULZ: Thank you, Pastor Cooper. We have the Nominating Committee report number 9, and each one of us will be reading one name at a time. For the position of East-Central Africa Division president, the incumbent, Blasious M Ruguri.

CHERYL CHAVERS: For the position of Euro-Asia Division president there is a statement that will be read prior to reading out the name. The Euro-Asia Division Caucus and the General Conference administration recommend to the General Conference Session Nominating Committee to extend the term of office of the three Euro-Asia Division officers until 2022 General Conference Annual Council because of the unusual circumstances prevailing in the Division. And for this position we have Mikhail Kaminskiy, incumbent.

MAGDIEL PEREZ SCHULZ: For the position of Inter-America Division president, we have the incumbent, Elie Henry.

CHERYL CHAVERS: For the position Inter-European Division president, Mario A Brito, incumbent.

MAGDIEL PEREZ SCHULZ: For the position of North American Division president, we have the incumbent, G Alex Bryant.

CHERYL CHAVERS: For the position Northern Asia-Pacific Division president, Yo Han Kim currently serving as Director of Adventist Mission and Assistant of NSD President Northern Asia-Pacific Division.

MAGDIEL PEREZ SCHULZ: For the position of South American Division president, we have the incumbent, Stanley Edilson Arco.

CHERYL CHAVERS: For the position South Pacific Division president, Glenn Townend, incumbent.

MAGDIEL PEREZ SCHULZ: For the position of Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division we have the recommendation of president, Harrington Simui Akombwa, currently serving as union president of Southern Zambia Union Conference in the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

CHERYL CHAVERS: For the position Southern Asia Division president Ezras Lakra, incumbent.

MAGDIEL PEREZ SCHULZ: For the position of Southern Asia-Pacific Division president, we have the recommendation of Roger O Caderma, currently serving as president of the South Philippine Union Conference in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

CHERYL CHAVERS: For the position Trans-European Division president, Daniel Duda, currently serving as Education Director, Trans-European Division.

MAGDIEL PEREZ SCHULZ: And finally, for the position of West-Central Africa Division president, there's the nomination of Robert Osei-Bonsu currently serving as the Dean of the Theological Seminary of the Adventist University of Africa in the West-Central Africa Division territory.

CHERYL CHAVERS: Mr. Chair, we so move this report.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. It has been moved. Is there a second? I see seconds. To tell you the truth, I wonder if you need to vote because you have already voted by clapping, isn't it? All right. Since all the divisions have caucuses that participated, I think there's no need for discussion and I see no one; so, let's proceed to the vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As is our custom, ElectionBuddy is firing up right now. You will see there the names and the positions and the ballot. I would remind everyone that with respect to ESD, there was a statement made, and that has a limitation. That was part of the presentation that wasn't on the ballot. Mr. Chairman, the ballot is open for voting now.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Let us vote. And please don't forget to submit. And while we are voting, thank you very much to all who have been working in the division caucuses. It was very significant work you did.

LOWELL COOPER: Brother Chair, if you would allow during this quiet interval while we're voting, the next step in the process of selecting division officers, that is, division secretary and division treasurer will now occur in its preliminary stage in the division caucuses with the presence of the newly elected president, assuming that this motion is carried. And so, we'd like to make all division caucus members

note that the division caucuses will meet immediately after the conclusion of this particular action. And it is our expectation that the Nominating Committee in its full plenary session will reconvene today at four o'clock. That's on the assumption that the division caucuses will complete their work within a span of 90 minutes.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much for overwhelming support. It is carried. Thank you, Brother Chair.

LOWELL COOPER: Thank you, Brother Chair. Despite some very, very strenuous efforts on the part of our team we have been able to assemble almost all of the division presidents. We have invited those who are here with spouses to come at this time, and we'll present the division president group. And after the picture is taken, Brother Chair, we've invited Elder Wilson if he might come and have a special prayer for this group of Church leaders.

ARTUR A STELE: Excellent. Let's do it this way. Let's welcome our brothers and sisters. Looks like someone has recognized a familiar face. All right. We will invite Elder Wilson to come to the microphone and to address our newly elected presidents and pray with us.

TED N C WILSON: I welcome Blasius and Elizabeth Ruguri to the group here and what a blessing to have a team of individuals who are going to be leading spiritually God's people literally around this globe. And by God's grace they will help lead God's people home as they look to Jesus, the real leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and all who believe in the Lord. And so now we will ask a very special blessing on these leaders, their spouses, their colleagues, who will yet be elected, that they may truly be servants of God in these very last days of earth's history. May I ask you to stand as we pray.

[Prayer by Ted Wilson.]

LOWELL COOPER: Brother Chair, perhaps in the interest of full disclosure, we could inform the body that the one division president who is not here is Mikhail Kaminsky from the Euro-Asia Division. I think we can understand that he has been unable to come to this Session. We recognize that the area of

the world in which he serves is under considerable turmoil at this time. And we regret that he is not here, but we wanted the body to know that.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much, Elder Cooper. And please, the delegates who are members of the division caucuses, please proceed to the rooms that are assigned to every division for nominating secretaries and treasurers. And members of the General Conference Nominating Committee, don't forget your work starts at four o'clock. All right. We'll take one more minute because there are so many cameras. And looks like the presidents are now smiling more than from the beginning. They really enjoy themselves. They like the place here. Thank you very much. Let's greet them and wish them God's blessings, leading and guidance. Thank you, dear brothers and sisters. All right. We will continue our interesting progress forward on *Church Manual* and Constitution and Bylaws. We still have items. Okay.

HENSLEY M MOOROVEN: Good afternoon. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. We will continue where we left off before we went to lunch. I would like to take you to item 209. There is one section that we did not vote on because we didn't know how long it would take and we did not want you to be late for lunch. We will go to page 48 lines 35 and 36.

What we are seeking to do here, Pastor Chair, is to harmonize the language. This is purely editorial because in Article 5, Section 10 when we refer to delegates, we call them credentialed delegates. So, we are moving the deletion of accredited to be replaced with credentialed and we will be consistent with other reference of this word in our governing document. I have moved it.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. It has been moved. A second? Seconded. Thank you very much. Any questions, observations? I don't see anyone wishing to speak; so, let's proceed and vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are in the process of opening that now. All right, Mr. Chairman. It's open now for voting.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you. Let's vote. And don't forget to submit.



ARTUR A STELE: We are very sorry for our people who are on Zoom in places where it's already midnight and later. But thank you for staying with us. And I see some of you smiling on the screens. This is a good sign. Thank you very much. Okay. Let's close the vote.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. Overwhelming support. Thank you. Let's continue.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Thank you very much, Pastor Chair. If you permit me, I would like us to take 210 together with 211, as these two items are very similar.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. The more similarity you will find, the better for us.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Excellent. So, what are we seeking to do here? I am on page 50. In June 2011, the Office of Archives and Statistics became Archives, Statistics and Research. We are adding the research component, and we are deleting the word "office." What you have on page 50 and 51 are almost identical. I have therefore moved these two items, Pastor Chair.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. It has been moved. Is there a second? Thank you very much. It has been seconded. Are there any questions or observations? I don't see anyone in the queue. Probably we can proceed and vote. Let's go and vote.

[Voting]

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much for the great support. The motion carries. All right, Hensley, let's continue.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to inform our ASTR Director that these two items were carried. I know that you will like what I'm going to tell you just now because this is the last item on the Constitution and Bylaws agenda.

ARTUR A STELE: Amen!

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: And I even heard someone say hallelujah, amen. What we are seeking to do here, Pastor Chair, in some areas of the world the word "mission" has a different connotation and is often a point of sensitivity that could potentially inhibit the mission of the Church.

Yes, we do have such areas on the globe. Now we are seeking to substitute these names when the word “mission” appears, we use the word “section” instead. And in such cases, it is understood that “section” carries the same meaning as “mission” and in all cases where the Constitution and Bylaws refer to a local union or union mission, the same also applies to a local section or union section. There is a territory currently that finds itself in this situation, and we are asking the body to allow us to have this directive. If it is clear to the house, I would like to move to approve a directive to amend the GC Constitution and Bylaws where appropriate by including “section” as a substitution for “mission” when referencing a union mission, a local mission, or other examples are given here. I have moved this item.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. It has been moved. Is there a second to provide more flexibility? Yes. I see some seconds. Any questions, observations? All right. I don't see anyone in the queue. No one walking to the mics. And in the Zoom, the same. Okay, let's vote.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you. Our number has reduced a little bit because of the caucuses that are meeting right now. This is the explanation of it. But most of you are very faithful and came at the exact time after lunch. You really deserve a big thank you. All right. Let's end.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Again, very strong support. This motion carries. Thank you very much. Thank you, Hensley. How would you like to celebrate finishing the Constitution and Bylaws?

HENSLEY M MOOROVEN: The celebration will be that the committee meets this afternoon, we will continue the work because someone said that life is like a bicycle. To keep your balance, you need to keep on moving. So, we will continue to move. This afternoon from 5:45 to 6:30 the Constitution and Bylaws Committee will meet in room 160. We have taken note of all your contributions, of your valuable input, and we will ensure that these are factored in. So, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for your support. And we thank the team that has worked diligently behind the scenes. We are very happy that we can move forward. We hopefully will have a report tomorrow for the body. Thank you again. Oh,

thank you also to my colleague Karnik. He was like a fireman here. Whenever there was something, he intervened. Thank you very much, Karnik.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Thank you very much. We will now move to the *Church Manual*, and we are waiting for our people. Gerson, are you here? All right. Let's see if we can move at the same speed as we did in the Constitution and Bylaws. All right. It looks like last night we started an issue, there was a motion, and we have not finished the discussion. So maybe Gerson, if you would be so kind to remind our delegates what the motion was, where we are standing, and then we will give the chance to those who were in the queue to speak.

GERSON P SANTOS: Excellent. Thank you, Pastor Chair. As you remember, yesterday we were working on this important item that you have on your agenda. The item on the agenda is number 412. The reference number is 436-22. In your agenda it's page 70, item 412. Just a brief reminder that we spoke about several different items. The first is referring to an option to have a standing nominating committee, one of the reasons for that is to facilitate assimilating, promoting, equipping, and giving opportunity for leadership for new members because they were integrated to the Church by a baptism or transfer from another Church, and this will give more opportunity for representation from the Church in general as a standing nominating committee to offer the opportunity for new leadership between terms, not just at the end of the year or every two years, depending on the situation of each Church. The second area we cover is related to representation, as you see on page 71, how the process works. We also mentioned the idea of having representation from different sectors or parts of the congregation, in other words, avoiding having spouses together, brothers or siblings together on the church nominating committee. So as much as possible have representation from different groups of the Church. The following page, page 72, we have by vote the Church appoints its officers by ensuring the number of years to continue to serve until there's a resignation, replacement, or the beginning of the new term. And the last paragraph on page 72, filling vacancies between elections. We mentioned here that

someone would be replaced during the term of office because of death, removal, resignation, or any other reason, and this is the phrase that we are adding, “and there is no standing nominating committee to fill the nominations, the board may nominate.” These are basically the main things in this item, number 412. And we have a few names. I believe we still have those names in line. Let's see if they are here, Pastor Chair.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. We have from yesterday in the queue on the microphone number 8 from Eastern Nigeria Union Conference, Beniah Ojum. Then on microphone number 6, Jeff Scoggins, General Conference, and on microphone number 4, David Kikwy from Kenya Union Conference and then six more speakers. Let's see if any of these three are here. Beniah Ojum, would you like to speak about the issue? Okay. I see Jeff Scoggins is coming to the microphone. Let's put him first. Microphone number 6.

JEFF SCOGGINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was very pleased to see this item on the agenda. It was actually included in the 2005 Church Manual in the notes section, and it was called the Ministry Development Committee. I was pastoring at the time, and it immediately captured my imagination. And we implemented what is now being called the standing nominating committee. There were several fantastic results that came out of this for us. Number one, the Church board typically only fills empty positions when they need to be filled. But from experience they didn't usually proactively attempt to put new people in as they came into the Church. Ideally that would happen, but often there's so much other work, it doesn't happen. So, this group that we had concentrated on putting people to work, which is one of the vital lifelines for a local Church. The other thing that happened, a side benefit, was that much of the angst that often surrounds the yearly exodus and then reentrance of all the different church positions simply disappeared. The process was fluid and constant. The people would come in and go out of their positions as was necessary. The people that thrived on the conflict each year simply went silent. So, there were a number of positive things in that way as well. So, I would highly recommend that we

support this and at least give us the option. Any Church that doesn't want to do it doesn't have to. If they prefer the usual way.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. Thank you, Jeff. All right. Let's see if Beniah Ojum is here.

BENIAH OJUM: Mr. Chair, thank you for the opportunity. My contribution is very similar to the last contributor. My curiosity here is the exceptional circumstance that is put there. I need that defined so that it will not be abused. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. Thank you. Let's move to David Kikwai. Are you here?

DAVID KIKWAI: Thank you so much, Brother Chairman. I'm standing here to oppose the standing committee that is in place throughout the year because to my understanding it's like an interim company, a caretaker committee preparing for the leaders to be sworn in and to continue with the job. If we have a standing committee throughout the year, they'll work in tandem in no position, in competition with the board that's already in place. So, I oppose by saying they only act that short time; when the rest assumes the position, the work ceases. So, I beg to oppose.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. David Trim, microphone 7.

DAVID TRIM: Thank you, Brother Chairman. I will move to call the previous question.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. Is there a second? I see a number of hands. Thank you for helping the chair. Let's vote on the previous question. I see a point of order on microphone number 2.

ARTUR A STELE: Number 2, microphone number 2.

JAANUS-JANARI KOGERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do believe that yesterday we actually talked about this issue and we basically agreed to refer it back to the Church Manual Committee because of several issues raised from the floor, namely the deadlines of the standing nominating committee, how it is going to be elected or reelected and that kind of thing. Therefore, I do believe that if we are going to return to the previous question now and we are going to vote, then those yesterday's questions are going to not be answered.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. What we are doing now, because there were people in the queue who wanted to speak, and we had to finish; so, we went the way of allowing those who wanted to speak, to speak. Now came the motion to stop the debate. We will vote on stopping the debate and then after the standing committee meets, they will bring it back. We're just stopping the discussion here.

JAANUS-JANARI KOGERMAN: Just a clarification. So, we are not going to vote on the motion?

ARTUR A STELE: No.

JAANUS-JANARI KOGERMAN: Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: We're just voting to stop the debate because it was abrupted yesterday.

STEINUNN THEODORSDDOTTIR: I think I also have a point of order. I asked the question yesterday about this matter. I was asking how long this standing committee has been working, it doesn't say. And also, what is family?

ARTUR A STELE: Okay, thank you very much. I don't think it is a point of order, but for clarification we will ask Gerson to respond.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, while we're taking these questions, we do have 413 who voted. So, it is open. Please vote on the motion for the previous question. So that ballot is open.

GERSON P SANTOS: Sure. I'll be glad to do that, Pastor Chair. We haven't met with the Committee so I cannot report anything thing. We will be meeting now.

ARTUR A STELE: So, we are not voting on the item today. We just stopped the debate because the queue was still open from yesterday. We finished the debate. If you vote to finish it, it will go to the standing committee, and after they have done the work, they will come back to us.

[Voting]

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you for this clarification. So, what we are doing, we are not proceeding immediately to the voting. We're just voting to stop the debate. And the questions that have been

raised will go to the Church Manual Standing Committee and, after they have discussed it, they will come back to us. Gerson, when is the Church Manual Standing Committee meeting?

GERSON P SANTOS: Tomorrow, lunchtime. Room 160.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Tomorrow in room 160 at lunchtime they will work, and we hope they will come to us with some results. All right. We can stop.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, all right, the balloting is stopped. 1,288 ballots and we will see the display here momentarily. There we are.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. So, a clear majority, 94 percent, would like to stop the discussion. This we will do. And we will proceed to another item. We are not going to vote for it, as we explained. Okay, Gerson.

GERSON P SANTOS: Thank you, Pastor Chair, the next item, 413, we cannot move into that right away because as you can see the reference number has the same number as the previous item, letter B, which indicates that they are correlated; so, I ask permission, Mr. Chair, to move on to the next one which is 414.

ARTUR A STELE: Let's do it.

GERSON P SANTOS: Okay. Item 414 is on the agenda, page 74. This is a very important item, very simple but extremely important. We make this mistake all the time when we say that people are reelected and the item has the purpose of clarifying that term. Since there is no reelection with the Church, this directive removed this terminology. In other words, a person can be elected to go back to the same office for a new term. So, using the word "reelection" is not a correct term. So, the recommendation is to approve a directive to amend the *Church Manual* where appropriate, by replacing "reelect" with "elect to a new term of office." I move, Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. It has been moved. Is there a second? Seconded. Any questions, observations? I think it is a very healthy suggestion. Because they were elected only for one

term, and otherwise it creates an expectation if you use the word “reelection.” Looks like there is no one who would like to speak about this item, not here nor on Zoom. Let's proceed and vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. We are proceeding. We will be opening up here momentarily for voting.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman, it is now open for voting.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you. Let's vote and submit our vote.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. It looks like we have reached our number. Probably we can close.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. We've closed. 1,328 voted and we'll see the results here.

ARTUR A STELE: All right, 99 percent supported. Thank you very much. Thank you. Gerson? Next item.

GERSON P SANTOS: Thank you, Pastor Chair. I wish we could have all the items being easy like that, but I understand some are a little bit more complicated. Let's go to the next page if you are following your agenda, item 415. In the agenda it is page 75, item 415. The reference number is 437-22. And you see the letter A which, in this case, there are two other items to be presented related to that. So, the rationale behind this recommendation is that this amendment encourages deacons to assist members with special needs. You have seen in recent years the Church has been very careful trying to provide attention to those who require special needs. And because of that not just attend their needs but also to empower those who can minister to them. So, we are including the duties of deacons as the recommendation for that. As you can see on page 75, number 2, it is just a minor correction there. We are actually just adding a comma after “churches”. And then we have a full paragraph, still under number 2 that states like this.



“Deacons should also assist members with special needs. It is important to learn how to effectively communicate with them and, where needed, church facilities and transportation should be made accessible. When those with special needs are not able to attend services, they should be visited in their homes.”

Pastor Chair, this is a very clear recommendation to be more careful with our members, especially those that have special needs. So, I move, Pastor Chair. We accept the recommendation.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. It has been moved. There is a second. Thank you. It has been seconded. I see two people have registered to speak. On microphone number 1, Stephan Sigg, Swiss German Conference, EUD.

STEFAN SIGG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm standing here with my disappointment. I'm concerned regarding the continuing discrimination of women in our Church by not treating them equally and granting women equal rights. We continue to do this despite our belief that women bear the image of God in the same way as men as representatives of the human family. The fact that we still distinguish the function and tasks of deacons and deaconesses seems to me another expression of our shortcomings. While, for example, deaconesses can greet and visit guests and members they are not allowed to assist at services and meetings as their male colleagues. They can make arrangements for the communion services but they are not allowed to assist at communion services. I support the amendment that visitation of members applies for both deacons and deaconesses alike as well as the assistance of members with special needs. But why not give them equal responsibilities in all deaconal services? Our experience in and outside the Church gives ample evidence for the fact that leadership functions and competences are not questions of gender. Can you explain to me why we still need a specific section on deacons and a different one for deaconesses?

ARTUR A STELE: All right, Brother Sigg. This is actually not the motion that is in front of us.

STEFAN SIGG: The motion is that you align this amendment in the section of the deacons as well as in the deaconesses. But why only this?

ARTUR A STELE: No, the motion is to add a new paragraph here that was read by Pastor Santos, is that correct?

GERSON P SANTOS: Pastor Chair, if I may.

ARTUR A STELE: Yes, please.

GERSON P SANTOS: I want to clarify—this is a very important item. We are giving special attention to those who require special attention. The purpose of this paragraph is emphasized in the need to have our deacons involved in attending to those who require special attention. The speaker is right also in the sense that he is addressing another issue, not specifically this one, but he is raising another point. I don't think it will be appropriate for us to discuss that, even though he has a good point. But it's not dealing with the item we have in front of us.

ARTUR A STELE: But can you somehow notice his point so that—

GERSON P SANTOS: Definitely. And we can follow the procedure and discuss this in our committee and present it to the body at a later Session.

STEFAN SIGG: By the way, we do not separate women and men's elder functions, but we do it with deacons and deaconesses.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. Your comments have been received and the Church Manual Committee will discuss it. But right now, we're discussing a whole paragraph here. Okay. We move to the next microphone, microphone number 5, Debbie Jackson, North American Division.

DEBBIE JACKSON: Mr. Chair, I agree with the gentleman that just spoke, and I also ask that we use the word qualified deacon and deaconess. People with special needs oftentimes need people to move them or work with them that have training so that they are not injured more or they're not injured in transport, et cetera. So, I would suggest that we add "qualified."

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. Thank you. We move to the next microphone, and this is microphone number 2, Martin Altink.

MARTIN ALTINK: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. I speak here as a father of a daughter with special needs. And I think it is very important to have something like this in our manual. At the same time, I do recognize and realize how difficult it might be to work with people with special needs. So, I think this needs to be realized and needs to be stressed. But I am very much in favor of what is written here. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Martin. We move to microphone number 6, Flaviano from North American Division.

FLAVIANO DALISAI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like clarification on page 75, lines 21 and 22, where it says “. . . and where needed, church facilities and transportation should be made accessible.” And we understand that many of our churches don't have the resources to make this possible.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. Gerson, would you like to respond?

GERSON P SANTOS: Sure. I'll be glad too. I don't have the solution, but the speaker touched exactly the point that we are raising here. We need to provide resources for local churches and invest in their facilities and provide transportation for those who need special access. So that's exactly the point that we are including here on lines 21 and 22. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you. We are going to microphone Number 7, Heather Ferguson, General Conference.

HEATHER FERGUSON: Thank you. Just looking at the term “special needs” and then looking later on in that same sentence at “communicate” and then “accessibility,” are all a little unclear because the term “special needs” is very broad. That can really refer to individuals with physical handicaps, individuals with hearing impairments, visual impairments, those who may have autism. So, I think that could, just by the way that it reads, become a little convoluted and a little confusing.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. So, we move to the next microphone, microphone number 5, Danelle Cuffie, Trans-European Division.

DANELLE CUFFIE: Hello. Good afternoon. Yes. So, I wanted to really echo some of the points that have been raised already but just to add as an addition relating to training and development, particularly working with special needs individuals, they are quite a vulnerable group of individuals. So, we need to ensure that sufficient training and developmental opportunities are provided for the deaconry to ensure that we don't do more harm than good from the top down. I think that's crucial and I think that the individuals in our communities are disserved by not making sure we're equipped with the skills and the resources. The practical resources, yes, transportation, but the knowledge and the know-how to make sure we do an effective and very good job at that as well.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Danella. We move to microphone number 2, Jaanus-Janari Kogerman.

JAANUS-JANARI KOGERMAN: Thank you. I do have an issue with the terminology which is used already in the *Church Manual* and the word or term "special needs" is used already three times in the *Church Manual* related to single-parent families and Adventist students in universities, as well as other students in public universities. So, I do believe that we need to look at those terms and make sure that the terminology will be a little bit different if we are talking a different type. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Jaanus. We go to microphone number 6, Leroy Chacon.

LEROY CHACON: Mr. Chairman, I move the previous question.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. A question has been called. Is there a second? Yes, I see some seconds. Thank you very much. Let's vote, stop the debate.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. We are moving to that. It will be opened here momentarily.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. It is open for voting now.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Let us vote. And don't forget to submit. Thank you for a number of good suggestions. It's really long overdue statements that we needed in our *Church Manual*, but it's a beginning, but we need to improve it as a number of you have suggested, and I'm sure the *Church Manual* Committee will continue working on perfecting it. This item requires two-thirds of the vote. Okay. Let's close it.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. We are closing the ballot now. It looks like 1,338 people cast the ballot. Results displaying now.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. There is overwhelming support to close the debate and we go immediately to vote on the item.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. Just going to navigate back there to the main motion. It will be open here momentarily.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, it's open for balloting now.

ARTUR A STELE: Okay. Let us vote. And submit the ballot.

[Voting]

ARTUR A STELE: All right, let us close the vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. We are closing the balloting. Looks like we have 1,286. It will be displayed here now.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you. There is overwhelming support. This motion passes. Thank you very much. Gerson, let's move on.

GERSON P SANTOS: That's excellent. Let's move on. Number 416. It's exactly the same recommendation, this time for the deaconesses. As you can see on the screen or following our agenda, we are adding number 2 which is related to the visitation of members. It's new in the section of

deaconesses, but it's exactly the same paragraph that you have in the previous section for the deacons. And we are adding the following paragraph that we discussed before as you see in your agenda. I move, Mr. Chair.

ARTUR A STELE: All right, you have moved it. Is there second? Seconded. Since it is the same item, can we take it by common consent? If I don't see any objections, then we'll take it by common consent. I see no one on Zoom. And no one is here in the queue. Microphone number 2, Petronio.

PETRONIO MARDO GENEBAJO: Mr. Chairman, I just would like to ask about number 2, the word "district care." Visitation is arranged by distributing membership by districts. Like in the Philippines, district is defined as congregation like several churches, four to 12 Churches. So probably we can have an asterisk in defining what district is, areas or something that will not make this term confusing.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much, Petronio. Can you register for that?

GERSON P SANTOS: Yeah. Definitely.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. Microphone number 5, Good-Son Shumba.

GOOD-SON SHUMBA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think this is a very good initiative. I just wanted to find out, are we not creating an expectation of which if it is not met it will create a liability for the Church?

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. Gerson, can you respond to it?

GERSON P SANTOS: Pastor Chair, this is not a matter for us to decide. We are just emphasizing the need to attend to people that requires special attention. If in a community, there is nobody that requires special needs or if the local congregation does not have resources to attend them, it's up to the local Church to decide. But I believe as a body, as an organization, we have the duty to emphasize the need to attend to everyone. And that's the purpose.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. Microphone number 4, Abraham Dalu.

ABRAHAM DALU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity. I think with this and the previous motion probably someone has already suggested to add the word qualified deacons or deaconesses and also to expand the word special needs to our young people especially in today's world that may be struggling with substance abuse and other issues, just to expand that concept. Thank you. I support the motion.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We have English Zoom 101, Brother Goldaimei. Go ahead. Just in time.

LUNGAICHUNGPOU GOLDAIMEI: Regarding the term "district," even in Southern Asia Division we have some confusions regarding that word. We have circle pastors, not district pastors. And so, if that term can be studied again.

ARTUR A STELE: We hear you very well. And we got your suggestion, and we will request the *Church Manual* Committee to really clarify it in the future.

LUNGAICHUNGPOU GOLDAIMEI: And second point. I have been waiting for three days now, but I have not seen the *Church Manual*, chapter 5, regarding organizing a church and organizing a company. If it is possible to specify with some membership for organizing a church and for organizing a company.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. The second point that you have raised, I think it is coming as the next item. So just wait for the second one, okay? But we got your suggestion. And we will register it for future study. Thank you very much. All right. There is no one, then we will register and accept it by common consent. I don't see anyone opposing it. Okay. Let's move on.

GERSON P SANTOS: Thank you, Pastor Chair. We have item number 417, 437-22, letter c. It's about organizing a company. As you can see on the screen, there is a new paragraph. In your agenda, it's the first paragraph on page 78. And this is what the paragraph, the addition says. "Since ordination does not take place in companies, deacons and deaconesses should not be elected, but men and women should be voted in the local congregation as 'company assistants.' Their duties will be similar to those

performed by the deacons and deaconesses of organized churches where activities do not require ordination.” I move, Pastor Chair.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. It has been moved. Is there a second? I see some seconds. Thank you very much. And I also see two people wishing to speak. Microphone number 1, Crystal Knight, Welsh Mission. And then the next speaker will be on microphone number 3, Musa Sombi from ECD. Okay, Crystal Knight.

CRYSTAL KNIGHT: I just wanted to speak toward the deaconesses and deacons, in a sense, what are we going to do to help provide training and support for helping our deacons and deacons to effectively communicate with their members who have special needs? Are we just expecting every single division to decide themselves and provide their own adequate training, or is there something from the top down?

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Although it's not directly on the motion, we will ask Gerson to give some clarification.

GERSON P SANTOS: Sure. I'd love to do that. This is an excellent point, as you stated, while it is not related to this motion, the question is still valid and extremely important. And this is why, Pastor Chair, we have just a couple items down the agenda dealing specifically about this. And there is a service that the church will provide and if you allow us just a few minutes we'll get to that point. The church has been preparing something very important to present to you. It's one of the items on the agenda. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Crystal moves much faster than we are. We have to keep up. Thank you, Crystal. Okay, number 3. Musa?

MUSA SOMBI: Thank you, Pastor Chair. I would like to accept this motion. I am positive about the recommendation that has been brought by the committee. But I just want to add a few insights regarding those areas that are remote. We have some churches which have maybe three to four



companies, and you can find that one company is 50 to 80 kilometers away and you can find that they have maybe 50 to 80 church members that are coming to worship together, though they have not yet been qualified to be churches because they are still under some circumstances. So, I would like to suggest the idea of having the company assistants is good and I am very positive about that, but sometimes you can see it is a difficulty to conduct maybe baptism. You can find that the pastor is traveling maybe a whole day going to baptize. So, when he does not have the deacon to assist him when the baptism sometimes is very difficult. So, we can request this to be an option for those companies which they can manage to have some deacons, they can be maybe allowed to do that, and those who have few members, they can have their company assistants so that you can assist in the mission to reach more people. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Musa. Now we have on Zoom two people wishing to speak, both of them on 101, English Zoom, from SUD first, Goldaimei, please. You can speak, brother.

LUNGAICHUNGPOU GOLDAIMEI: Mr. Chairman, thank you once again. My question is regarding organizing a company, the *Church Manual* says in the second paragraph, the division and/or conference should have written guidelines for organizing companies within its territory. But I have not seen these guidelines from our division. I want to know whether any division has this guideline? So, my specific question is, in order to organize a company, how many baptized members should they have? And even for organizing a church. So, is it possible to have some kind of guidelines of membership, a baptismal member in order to be an organized church and organized company? This is the question that I wanted to ask. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Brother Goldaimei. It's not on the exact motion, but maybe you can provide some help, Gerson.

GERSON P SANTOS: Of course. I'll be glad to do that, since you are talking about new groups of new believers, new communities, I'm excited about it. And I understand what the previous speaker

mentioned about the need to have guidelines. Specifically, what the *Church Manual* recommends is that the divisions and local fields should provide those guidelines. If you don't have any in your specific area, you should request your conference and your division to provide those guidelines. What the *Church Manual* is suggesting is that we should have the responsibility to provide the guidelines because we are operating all over the world. We have so many different types of churches. We heard a little while ago about small congregations with 50 or 70 people while in many of our countries, 70 people is the average size of a church; so, we cannot give specific guidelines that would serve the needs of the work in the field all over the world. Therefore, Pastor Chair, this amendment is just confirming the need that we have in the *Church Manual* requesting the local fields under the guidance or orientation of the divisions provide those guidelines to foster growth and new church planting.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We move to English Zoom 101, Xolisa Lefume.

XOLISA LEFUME: Thank you. Thank you, Pastor Chair. Am I audible? I'm speaking in favor of the motion, but I would like to add some clarity. When it speaks of assistants, company assistants that must be elected in the local church, I see ambiguity there, and that can cause confusion. If it can be read that those company assistants must be elected at the mother church because other districts are multiple church districts. So, which local church will then assume that responsibility? Multiple circle churches or church circles, which local church will assume that responsibility? Some companies, their membership is with the conference is called conference church. So, I believe if it can be specific and says those company assistants must be elected at the mother church, then there will be no ambiguity or confusion. Thank you, Chair.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We move to microphone number 5, Ron Carlson.

RON CARLSON: Yeah, Mr. Chairman, I notice on this new proposal that it appears that a company assistant is gender neutral. And I just want to thank the committee for taking this step forward and hope it's a sign for the future. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We move to microphone number 2, Danny Philip, SPD.

DANNY PHILIP: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that the leadership of the company church actually comes from the organized church, from the mother church so the company church leaders actually should come from the mother church. That is where the ordinations of the deacons and deaconesses should be done. The selections of the leaders should be done at the mother churches, maybe in the places where there is no organized church, maybe this statement can be relooked at and applied. But in the places where there is already an organized church or mother churches, leadership should be appointed at that place and should be ordained there and then sent out to the company churches. Thank you, Chairman.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We move to microphone number 4, Jonas Arrais, NSD.

JONAS ARRAIS: Brother Chairman, I see that there is a kind of misunderstanding between company and branch. The branch is connected to the mother church. Company is an organized company. We don't ordain anybody in the company. Even the mother church cannot ordain somebody and send them to the organized company. They can send maybe to the branch. So, in the company, we don't have elders. We have company directors because in the companies there is no ordination. So, in order to have deacons in the company, it does not make sense because there is no elder without ordination and there is no deacons or deaconesses without ordination. Biblically and historically, we can see in Acts chapter 6, verse 6 the process of electing and laying on of hands. So, in many places people are electing deaconesses or even elders and they are not ordaining. There is no elder without ordination. In order to be an elder or in order to be a deacon or deaconess in the church, they must have two legs. One leg is election. The second leg is ordination. Only election does not allow somebody to perform that office. And only ordination by itself does not allow itself. That person must be elected for that ecclesiastical year. For this reason, I support fully this item regarding using the company assistant in order to keep the consistency in the *Church Manual*. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Jonas. We have come to the end of those wishing to speak. Let us proceed to vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are opening up the balloting as we speak. It should be displayed here momentarily. Should be open now, Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Let us vote and not forget to submit.

[Voting]

TODD MCFARLAND: We are at 1,256.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. I think we can get close.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR A STELE: We will skip some items from discussing it now from the *Church Manual* because we don't have a person who will present them. And this will be done then later tonight. But we will just skip over some items. We have strong support, 97 percent. Thank you very much. Let's move on.

GERSON P SANTOS: Thank you, Pastor Chair. The next item is number 418. And it is about The Spirit of Prophecy writings, 425-22. It's on your agenda page 79, is the item number 418. The rationale behind this recommendation is that to add this addition to the *Church Manual* emphasizes the importance of The Spirit of Prophecy and creates the position of a Spirit of Prophecy writings coordinator in the local church. So, it is recommended to add a new section called the Spirit of Prophecy to the *Church Manual*, and this will be following the personal ministries on page 102. And the paragraph has the title, as I stated, Spirit of Prophecy Writings and it says "The Scriptures testify that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant Church and we believe it was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G White. Her writings speak with prophetic authority and provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction to the Church. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested." And we have several Bible texts to

support that paragraph. The following paragraph says “Spirit of Prophecy Writings Coordinator—The church elects a Spirit of Prophecy writings coordinator with the responsibility of promoting the importance and right use of the Spirit of Prophecy writings, in collaboration with the publishing ministries coordinator.” I move, Pastor Chair.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. It has been moved. Is there a second? I see some seconds. Thank you very much. And we have a number of those wishing to speak. We will move to microphone number 7, Jeff Scoggins.

JEFF SCOGGINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let me be the first to say that I have complete and total respect for Ellen White's writings, but I am a little concerned about the practical effect on the local church. I've actually noticed from my personal experience that the reality at the local church is that often Ellen White receives primacy over the Bible even. Not that anyone would actually say that, but that's the way that it actually turns out. And I'm afraid that this would actually backfire on us. I completely understand the intention behind it and think that it's good, but I'm afraid that in actual effect, it's not what would actually improve the situation in our churches but would actually take extremes to further extremes. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We move to microphone number 2, Andreas Bochmann.

ANDREAS BOCHMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Spirit of Prophecy is certainly of value for the church. I know and appreciate that. And yet or because of that, I stand to oppose the motion. Apart from the practicalities just mentioned of filling the position, especially in smaller churches, I fear such an office would not accomplish what is intended. Members interested in studying The Spirit of Prophecy have plenty of resources available, many even online and free of charge. Members who are somewhat less interested in studying The Spirit of Prophecy will be reluctant to have their enthusiasm ignited by a church officer. Even more dangerous and, Brother Chairman, I'm not sure how to put this without offending anyone, but let me try. Not only wrong things but right and good things in life can be idolized.

When it comes to The Spirit of Prophecy, I would not want to even give the appearance by codifying an explicit office dealing with nothing else but the writings of Ellen G White at the local church. But that potentially can happen inside the church if it becomes standard policy and almost certainly it will feed that very prejudice among our fellow Christians around us, that we claim Sola Scriptura but don't really mean it. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We have now a speaker at the English Zoom room 101, Rabea Kramp from EUD.

RABEA KRAMP: Thank you. I really appreciate this idea to create a new position of a coordinator for The Spirit of Prophecy especially because we know that one of the signs of the end will be the making of no effect The Spirit of Prophecy. So, I hope this position of a coordinator in our local churches might help to minimize this development in the end time and make us aware of the wonderful gift of Ellen White and her writings. And, as you may or may not know, several fields in our world Church treat these inspired writings very differently after the fact that in some areas, church members are not allowed to distribute Ellen White books for mission because the church leaders have hidden them or even forbid it. So, this new section can be a sign that we need to uplift her writings even more. And I know many church members in Europe, young and old, who would enthusiastically welcome this new section and would be more than willing to put it into practice. So, I want to speak in favor of this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Rabea. We now move to microphone number 5, Ted Huskins from NAD.

TED HUSKINS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. You know, at first glance I was really excited about this proposal. But as I thought about it, I became concerned. I, for one, value the contribution and cherish the writings of Ellen White. But growing up in the church, I also experienced the discouraging influence of those who are passionate about our little red books but do not have the corresponding

understanding of revelation and inspiration. Many of these well-meaning saints take on the words of the Prophet and make of themselves little prophets and prophetesses, but they lack the call or the understanding. Ellen White herself said, "Brethren and sisters, I commend unto you this book." In her hands was the Bible. I appreciate the desire to champion her writings when they are too often ignored. But I do not believe she herself would find favor in this amendment. She would commend the Bible and ask us to champion that Holy Volume. As such, I stand against the motion.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We go to number 5, microphone 5, Sandra Colon from NAD.

SANDRA COLON: Hello. Thank you very much. I also respect Ellen White and her writings. I would like to say I have an issue particularly with the words that this position would promote the importance and right use of. I think that somebody in that position could take advantage of this charge, and it would basically trample the freedom of conscience as to how others would view the importance of these writings and how they would view the right use of them in their own personal lives and in their church. Therefore, I think that at a minimum, we need to refer this back.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you. We go to microphone number 1, Kayle De Waal, TED.

KAYLE DE WAAL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Like the other speakers, I too hold the writings of Ellen White in high regard. However, having taught in our Adventist education system now for more than a decade, there's anecdotal evidence—I wouldn't be surprised if there's also empirical evidence—that tells us that many of our young people don't know their Bibles. They don't know the basic Scriptures of the gospels or Paul's writings. And I've taught many of them preparing for ministry that, sadly, don't know their Bibles. The Bible is the primary means of our spiritual growth. And I wonder if, having taken the comments that others have made before me which I will not reiterate and just a question I wonder to Elder Santos, do we have a Reading the Bible Coordinator in the *Church Manual*? And there's no malice or sarcasm in my comment. It's a very sincere question. I spent 12 years in ministry, it's been a

couple of years since I was a local church pastor and embarrassingly, I've actually forgotten. Could I kindly have an answer, please, Mr. Chair, to that question?

ARTUR A STELE: I think you know the answer. Thank you very much. We will move to the next microphone, microphone number 2, Steve Goods, SPD.

STEVE GOODS: Yeah, one of the difficulties I have with this position, many of my pastors in the West Australian Conference struggle with an unbalanced position many of our members have on Ellen White. We respect Ellen White in western Australia and her work, but there are certainly many of our people who are unbalanced. They actually place Ellen White above the scriptures, and this is not going to help our position in trying to give balance. Ellen White was a very balanced writer, a very balanced person. Unfortunately, I believe that this is not going to help the church move back to a balanced position, and I am totally against the idea of this.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you. We go to Anthony Bosman, microphone number 7.

ANTHONY BOSMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When I was a university student at a secular university my faith was challenged. I doubted scripture. I had questions about my faith, but it was spending a summer going through *The Conflict of the Ages*, reading through those books, my confidence in Scripture was deepened, my love for Christ grew, and I came to see a beautiful portrait of a God who is love. I wish that every young adult and every church member could have that same experience. The reason I am here today is because of the prophetic ministry of Ellen White. At the same time, however, I have many friends I grew up with within the church, and the reason they are not here today is because some people used her writings not as a gift, but as a curse. They, in the words of Ellen White, would go around saying Sister White says this and Sister White says that, and they saw her merely as a burden. They were never free to experience the gift of her writings. If the church goes forward and decides to create this office in the local church, I urge us to reflect upon how we can bring the proper education and qualifications to those who will serve in this office. At Andrews University we have a graduate



program in Ellen White and Adventist studies. In this program we are equipping teachers and pastors to use her writings with balance, to let young people see them for the gift that they are. I encourage the church to continue to partner with us and other institutions to create a balance that we strive so much to see in her writings so that everyone can enjoy them for the gift that they are.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you. We move to microphone number 7, Clinton Wahlen.

CLINTON WAHLEN: Thank you, Brother Chairman. I stand here today as a product of the ministry of Ellen White. I used to be an atheist, and if it weren't for her writings leading me to the Bible and to love Jesus and to know His plan for my life, I would not be here today, and I would not be helping others know what I know. So, I appreciate these writings deeply. Secondly, I would like to point out that we actually do have Bible Reading Coordinators in every church under another name—Sabbath School teacher—because these at every level lead people to know the Bible and Jesus better. And finally, I would like to underscore a few words in this item that are important. It begins with our statement in the Fundamental Beliefs on The Spirit of Prophecy which I think is very helpful to include at this point, but it also underscores that this coordinator would not only teach about the importance of the writings but their right use. We're talking about the education of our church members as to how to appreciate and rightly use her writings. And I hope that that will address some of the concerns of the previous speaker. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you. We go to microphone number 4, Allwell Omeonu, WAD.

ALLWELL OMEONU: Thank you so much, Brother Chair, for this opportunity to make a contribution to this discussion. I truly believe that every organized church should have a coordinator for the works of Ellen G White. But then where are the books, where are the materials? What exactly will be the job definition of the coordinator? I want to submit, Brother Chairman, that in addition to getting this coordinator, let efforts be made to get her books, her materials for this church. If we want the effort we

had in producing The Great Controversy, if we want it in this phase, we would get the books to various churches. Thank you so much, Brother Chairman.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We go to our Zoom room, English Zoom room number 101. Simea from EUD. Please.

SIMEA AESCHBACHER: Thank you. I also want to say that I am happy about the writings of Ellen White and they are very helpful. But at the same time, I think it's not right to create the position in the church just for her writings because I think we should let the Holy Spirit lead us and guide us more. Evil is very wrong in the church and we need to have positions in the church according to what He gives to us and if there are people in the church who are guided to promote the writings of Ellen White, that's fine, but if there is no one, that is fine as well. So, I think we should not create this new position.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, we move now to microphone number 5, Randy Roberts, North American Division. Microphone number 5.

RANDY ROBERTS: I'll kind of join those who've spoken before me who seem intent on proving our bona fides by saying that we deeply value and appreciate Ellen White, which is true for me as well. However, I would really like to encourage our members to stop reading about the Bible and to start reading the Bible. We have spent so much time not just with Ellen White, by the way, reading about the Bible that we don't know how to read the Bible. If I were holding one, and I have a couple digital Bibles here in my hands, I would say that we have each staked our eternal destiny on what this book says, and yet I would be afraid to ask for a show of hands in this group as to how many have read it all the way through even one time, starting with "In the beginning, God" and ending with "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." We lose a tremendous blessing by that reality. And as we talk about creating this position, I think it's only going to take us further in that direction. I would suggest that pastors who are thoughtfully educated, who have learned to read scripture and have learned to read Ellen White are our best people to lead our congregations in this endeavor. Rather than creating another separate position, which is very

divisive and will prove to be very polarizing, I would encourage us to go back to reading scripture. If we claim to be people of the book, which we do, let us actually read the book.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you. We go now to microphone number 7, David Trim.

DAVID TRIM: Brother Chairman, I move to call the previous question.

ARTUR A STELE: All right, the previous question has been called. Is there a second? Yes, I see seconds. Thank you very much. Let's go and vote the previous question to end the debate.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. It will be opening up momentarily. It is open now, Mr. Chairman, for people to vote, to call the previous question.

ARTUR A STELE: All right, if you would like to end the debate, you vote "yes." If you would like to continue the discussion, you vote "no." And don't forget to submit. Since two-thirds is required for that, we would need to take the whole time, probably.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. I think we can close now.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. We are closing the ballots. Looks like 1,427 ballots were cast. Results momentarily.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Eighty-six percent would like to stop the debate. It's more than two-thirds. Let's immediately proceed to the vote on actual motion.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. We are moving to the main motion, item 418, it will be open momentarily.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, item 418 is open for balloting and voting now.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Let us vote on the actual motion. And don't forget to submit.

And while we are waiting and voting, maybe I will do a little advertisement. We are inviting every church member to read one chapter from the Bible every day for a number of years now, but in addition, in order to make the Bible more alive, we had a group of scholars working on two Bible

commentaries. One is a two-volume Andrews Bible Commentary, and it has been published just a few days before we started our session, one on the Old Testament, one on the New Testament. Dr. Angel Manuel Rodriguez is editor of it and many scholars have contributed, and I think you will be happy to get a copy of it from Andrews press.

Another Bible commentary is edited by Dr. Jack Doukan. It is a multivolume Bible commentary, and as significant progress has been done, it will be probably over 12 or more volumes when it will be done, but all efforts are done for our church members to study the Bible.

It's also interesting that David Trim can tell us when they do the evaluation, I think there is a little progress on it, or not. David, if you look at the evaluations you are doing, is there any progress in church members reading the Bible? Microphone number 7.

DAVID TRIM: Thank you, Brother Chairman. Yes, between 2013 and 2018, the percentage of people who read their bible regularly increased, and we're currently doing the next church member's survey, and we hope that next year we find that number has increased again.

ARTUR A STELE: And I think it's also true that the study shows those who read writings of Ellen White also read more of the Bible. Is that true?

DAVID TRIM: Yes, Brother Chairman, there is that correlation.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, our remaining 30 seconds, we have over 1,400 people who voted.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Probably we can close the vote, right, since we have more than usual this afternoon?

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. We are closing the vote as we speak. 1,423 voted and we'll see the results shortly.

ARTUR A STELE: All right, 66 percent. It carries. Let's move to another item.

GERSON P SANTOS: Thank you, Pastor Chair. We will skip the next two items. Let's go to item 421. That's in your agenda, page 83, item 421. It's reference number 443, and you have on the screen, the title is "Youth Ministries—Church Manual Amendment." The rationale behind this recommendation is this amendment is coming as a recommendation from the General Conference Youth Ministries in consultation with the divisions. As you can see in the chapter 8 of local church officers and organizations, in the pages 104 to 109 you have the section about Adventist Youth Ministries, actually Youth Ministries, and we are recommending the addition of the words "Adventist Youth Ministries." And you can see this change done on line 15, page 83, still page 83, line 15, instead of using just the initials, spelled out "Adventist Youth Ministries." And then lines 19 to 22. "In the quest for discipleship, the goal of AYM should be to *bring* all youth to a saving relationship with Christ, *build* them up in His Word to reflect a Christ-like character, *train* them how to serve the church and communities using their spiritual gifts, and *send* them out to reach the communities in the power of the Holy Spirit." As you can see, the Youth Ministries is recommending that the young people be equipped and engaged in ministry and the disciple-making process. So, the following paragraph had some editorial changes and additions, so this is why it is deleted. Then on the bottom of the page, still page 83, on lines 39 to 42 you have the age levels representing Junior Youth, Adventurers, and the recommendation is to change instead of six to nine, having now 4-9, and Pathfinders, age 10-15. Senior Youth Ambassadors age 16-21, and Young Adults, instead of 22-30 and plus, ages 22-30. These are the changes on page 83. Let's turn the page, the next page, page 84, last line on page 84 you can see the word "advisor" replacing the word the "sponsor." And the reason for that is according to the Youth Ministries, they say that the word sponsor creates some confusion, so they prefer the use of the word "advisor." That's what they recommended. And then continue saying, "The Young Adults leader, Ambassador leader, Pathfinder director, Adventurer director, and Public Campus Ministries leader are members of the church board representing Adventist Youth Ministries." Then on line 12 we have crossed out lines 12 and first part of line 13 and then the change to

“The Young Adults leader may chair the Adventist Youth Ministries Committee.” Then on line 31 and 32, cross out those lines. Let's turn to page to 86 you see on top of page 86, Adventurer Club, and you see to be consistent, we are changing again the age bracket of those participants in Adventurer Club from 6-9 to 4-9. And this is interesting, but I don't know how many of you have small kids or in my case I have grandchildren, and my grandson is four, and he's already an Adventurer; so, this is a change that is already happening in the field.

On line 9 we cross out line 9 and ten, and then we have on line 20, 21, “The five leaders/directors are members of the of the church board.”

Then you have line 27, “their respective sponsors.” That was crossed out, again, to be consistent, we are using the word “advisor” instead of “sponsor.” Let's go to the next and last page, page 87. On the top of page 87 you see “sponsor” again being crossed out and we use the word “advisor.” Then on line 4, same thing, replacing the word “sponsor” by “advisor” and cross out line 6. Line 8, same thing, changing the “sponsor” and now we're using here the “ministry leader” instead of “the sponsor,” and line 10, replacing “sponsor” with “advisor,” same thing on line 13.

Pastor Chair, it looks like a lot of changes, but I could summarize with saying that this is just nomenclature, adding the word Adventist Youth Ministry. That's the first major thing. Then you have a few changes in the age groups. This is something in many local fields they are already practicing. Also, there is an emphasis on equipping and mobilizing young people to be engaged in mission and disciple making. That's the first paragraph, the addition we have there. Then later on we have the reorganization of the Public Campus Ministry as used to be in the past. Coming back again under Adventist Youth Ministries, and in the last part of the document, replacing the words “sponsor” by the new word using recommended here “advisor.” Pastor Chair, I move we accept the recommendations from the Church Manual Committee.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you. It has been moved. Is there a second? Seconded. Thank you very much. We have a number of those wishing to speak. Microphone number 2, Petronio Genebago, Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

PETRONIO GENEBAJO: I fully support this proposal, having the discipleship program or direction of the goal of the AYM is emphasized. So, we fully support this proposal, and we thank the Youth Ministries department of the General Conference for facilitating this recommendation.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We go to microphone number 5, Debbie Jackson, North American Division.

DEBBIE JACKSON: Mr. Chair, there are just two additions. There's a group called Little Lambs. I believe it is 2-4 years old in Pathfinders; so, if we can add that. And then the second thing, when we're saying equipping, it would be nice if we could say we're equipping them to take leadership positions throughout the church, including the General Conference. This is a perfect place to have a pipeline so that we can incorporate our younger people into the leadership of the General Conference.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you. We go to microphone number 6, Clifton, NAD.

CLIFTON MCMILLAN SR: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. As one who has helped develop the children and Youth Ministries from the Little Lambs all the way up through the highest echelons of Pathfinding, I really would like us to look at the age stage development. Oftentimes, we have children that are either too old or too young crammed together. And I know sometimes that's because of the capacity or ability of the individuals to have people to work with the children. But I also believe that it's a deficit, and I'd just like us to look at that age piece so there's more in line with the age and stage. Thank you very much.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We go to microphone number 5, Angel, SID?

ANGEL CHIPULU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really want to commend the team for bringing those recommendations. They are very good for now because they have clarified some of the

outstanding issues in the department. One such issue is the issue of the name itself. Since the department is no longer Adventist Youth Ministry it's now Adventist Youth Ministries because of the five levels of Youth Ministries highlighted this evening. So, this is long overdue, and it will also clarify the issue of who chairs the Adventist Youth Ministries Committee. So, this, to me, has come at the right time, and it will even bring out those challenges that we face, especially those who should chair the Adventist Youth Ministries. So, with the recommendations that have been brought before us, we are very confident that the young adult leader is going to be the chairperson of the Adventist Youth Ministries Committee. So, I buy into these recommendations. Thank you, Chair.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Angel. We are going now to microphone number 2, Niklas from TED.

NIKLAS RANTANEN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to bring to your attention the line number 41 on page 83 concerning the age groups. I'm wondering if striking out the plus from the young adults 22 to 30+ is really a wise move. I'm sure that in some churches there are groups of friends, maybe from 29 to 30, 31. If local churches apply this strictly, they might cut out individuals from those groups. So, I really wonder, does the plus need to be stricken out? And that is why I move to amend the motion so that the plus stays in.

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

GERSON P SANTOS: Yes, sir. I'm not the Youth Ministeries director, but I can tell you that the plus is still here. Remember that for a while the Public Campus students were under another department. Now they are bringing this back again to the youth. And as you see on line 42, we have for the Public Campus students ages 16 to 30 plus. If the church doesn't have that ministry including the college public campus students, they can apply the same principle and use that for the youth. But that would be for the local church. In terms of our structure and organization, we know we have public campus students.

ARTUR A STELE: Okay. We go to microphone number 1, Ralf Hartmann, EUD.



RALF HARTMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate very much that Youth Ministries has a high priority in our church. I welcome the intention behind the changes in wording. But at the same time, I feel something is missing. I notice in many congregations young people, in their expressions of faith, are not seen and treated as equal. Also, the youth wording implies for me a certain passivity of the young people. We want to work on them and for them. Moreover, it seems in part that they are simply a means to our ends. I'm sure that is not the intention of the youth department, but it is always a reality in our churches. I would like to suggest for the future that we emphasize more that we want to work with our youth and feel that their input is important, becoming a truly intergenerational church with all generations working equally and intentionally together must be our goal as a church, and there's enough room to work on that. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. I see we have a point of order, microphone number 2. Niklas?

NIKLAS RANTANEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Not all young adults 30 plus are students. So that's why I think my point stands, and I ask you to ask if there is a second to my motion.

ARTUR A STELE: You cannot take a motion as you give a point of order. So, if you get in line now, register to speak, and then you can. When you first spoke, you didn't move it.

NIKLAS RANTANEN : I did.

ARTUR A STELE: You have to use wording, "I move" and then speak out. But you never said it. These words, you never said. He did move it. Have you heard the move?

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, we do have a transcript here. Let me check.

ARTUR A STELE: Okay, let's see the transcript.

TODD MCFARLAND: Yeah, Mr. Chairman, I am seeing the transcript here, and I don't see the word "I move" at all.

ARTUR A STELE: So, sorry, he has not used the words, "I move." You see, if you want to move a motion, you cannot say I would like to reconsider, you have to say "I move" and then follows. And this was not done. All right. We have a point of order on microphone number 2, Jaanus.

JAANUS-JANARI KOGERMAN: I do believe that we heard correct terminology that Niklas moved the motion, and that's why I would like to see the transcript on the screen as well. Is it somehow possible?

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. President, we are not set up to show the transcript. I've reviewed it here. I saw it. Chair has ruled. Listen, he can get in line, he can make the motion, but you can't do it from a point of order.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Thank you very much. We have someone wishing to speak on microphone number 6, Flaviano.

FLAVIANO DALISAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to receive general clarification into the title designation, specifically using the words "leader" and "director" which is used extensively in all these sections, whether a leader is truly a leader, director, truly a director, and so forth.

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

GERSON P SANTOS: Pastor Chair, the document is in front of us, and it's true, the words "leader" and "director" appear in the document. I have no additional comments on that.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. I need to say that now they have checked very carefully, and the motion that was apparently made, the wording was used in a sentence, not, exactly "I move" but the word "move" was used in the sentence; so, I am sorry, and I accept the motion. So please repeat your motion.

NIKLAS RANTANEN: Thank you. My apologies for the confusion. So, my motion is to amend the wording on line 41 so that the plus in the age group young adults 22 to 30+, the plus still stays in the text. I move the motion.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. So how would you like to proceed? Would you like to take it to the committee, or would you like to take the motion right here?

GERSON P SANTOS: Pastor Chair, it can be very confusing if we try to do here because I see the plus here at the end of the sentence. In many churches you don't have all age groups. For example, in Sabbath School we may not have all the divisions of the children's divisions to separate ages; so, you combine some of them in one room. The same thing could happen here. But apparently the speaker does not recognize them as being part of a separate group, if the church doesn't have public campus students. In that case, I think we need to discuss it in the committee.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. So, it has been moved, a motion has been made to make a change. So, let me speak to the one who made the motion. Are you comfortable if we ask the committee and we don't vote right now on the document, ask them to study it and then bring it back. Are you comfortable with that? Okay. Let's do it then. But we will hear others who have lined up for the motion. In the Spanish Zoom room, number 103, Hugo Kos, South American Division. Please.

HUGO FABRICIO KOS: Hello, Mr. Chairman. I have a question. My question is the following. Do we currently have a Youth Ministry coordinator? Is this person included on the board? As we know, Pathfinder Directors or Adventurer Directors are on the board.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Would you like to respond?

GERSON P SANTOS: Sure, Mr. Chair. The recommendation brought here is that they would be members of the church board. Of course, the church board needs to be voted by the local church, but this is the recommendation that has been brought to you. If accepted by the body, those will be the guidelines for us to apply in the local church. But still the local church needs to vote the members of their church board.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you. We go to microphone number 2, Jaanus, Estonian Conference (TED).

JAANUS-JANARI KOGERMAN: Thank you, Chair. On page 85, line 2, there is a text which says that “The Young Adults leader, Ambassador leader, Pathfinder director, . . . and Public Campus Ministries leader are members of the church board representing Adventist Youth Ministries.” I do believe that this is the only single time when any of the departmental leaders are put onto the church board to represent something. And I do believe that this is not the idea of the *Church Manual*, understanding of the church board tasks at all because the church board should be in charge of all of the church business. They can be the members, but I do think that it would be wise to revise this in a way in that they are just the church board members, not specifically representing only the youth ministries but they are the members of the church board.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. So, all your suggestions that you are making since we will not vote now and it will be brought back, allow them to consider all of this. Thank you very much.

ARTUR A STELE: I see a point of order on microphone number 3, Magulilo.

MAGULILO MWAKALONGE: Thank you, chairman. I heard some questions. I was part of the team of youth directors who prepared the document, and I see the former youth director pastor Gary Blanchard and pastor Pako, they are on the microphones. I don't know what would be the best procedure for them to address some of those because they're straightforward questions and they can be answered very easily instead of referring them back. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. It's not a point of order, but what I would suggest since the *Church Manual*, Standing Committee will meet, presumably they will ask the youth leaders that have participated in working out this document to join the group and express the reactions and so on. So, probably this is a way to do it. All right. I see in the English Zoom room 101 from SUD, Goldamei.

LUNGAICHUNGPOU GOLDAMEI: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I have a recommendation to the Church Manual Committee whether it is possible to add a mission statement to be included in Church Manual. That is my recommendation to the *Church Manual* Committee. if I can move the motion, if it could be

included. And then my second question will be, in my conference, from the direction of GC or division, Adventist Youth Federation, a kind of organization is formed; so, I'm wondering if that still exists as I have not found it listed in *Church Manual*. So, I need clarification regarding Adventist Youth Federation.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much for your suggestions and questions. We will also ask our group to study and respond to you. Number 1 microphone, Moises from South American Division. We need someone to translate. We have a translator here. Go ahead.

MOISES FERNANDO DA SILVA: Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon to you all. It is a privilege to be here at this special meeting before everyone. I would like to say that I agree with these recommended changes, they are perfect. I especially appreciate change of age ranges. I would like to possibly give a suggestion for the next General Conference—praise to God will not have any interference with COVID—that we won't have time to be here. Because I know that the work being done here is very important with the revision of the *Church Manual*. I would like to add that if it's possible in the future that we would have time to discuss other relevant facts to our Church. What is the reason we have so little young people being represented not only here but, in our churches, as well. It would be wonderful if the General Conference divided us into smaller groups so that we could share different experiences. That we can learn from each other so that we can grow together. Because I believe that all of us here are located where things happen. I would this to the planning committee and may God bless you.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We move now to microphone number 4, Darnelle from General Conference.

DARNELLE PIERRE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I would like to have a translator because I'm going to speak in French; so, thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: But your English is much better than mine.

DARNELLE PIERRE: I don't want to misspell something or say something I should not say.

ARTUR A STELE: Whatever language you feel better, please.

DARNELLE PIERRE: Thank you. I think I'm the youngest of the delegates here, it's a joy to be here. I'm in charge of the Adventurers and Pathfinders of my local church. I've seen that the youth club has the task of disciplining our young people. I would ask that we have some prerequisites for those who want to enter a special class. If we can train the young people for them to become missionaries after the program.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We go now to microphone number 4, Gary Blanchard, General Conference.

GARY BLANCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to share there's an amazing story in acts chapter 20 about a little boy that falls asleep on a three-story window and falls down to his death and the million-dollar question when you read that story is why nobody offered that young boy a seat. If they had offered him a seat, he might not have fallen out the window. I tell you, to sit on a window and as a result he lost his life! Thank God he was raised from the dead but what's amazing about this *Church Manual*, especially this section of Youth Ministry is it is a clarion call to every pastor and administrator around the world to invite young people to the seat, to invite them to come and sit around the board and be [included]. There are five positions now at the local church that young people can serve on. That's revolutionary. And I hope everybody's listening because you now have permission through the *Manual* to bring young people around the table in youth leadership. Mr. Chairman, do you want me to answer the question regarding the plus or do you want me to leave that one alone, Pastor Artur?

ARTUR A STELE: Well, I think there will be discussed. If you would be so kind to join the group. Because I have, you know, misheard my dear brother who moved, and so I have to repent in, you know, ashes, and this is why even your explanation will not save us; so, you need the brother to come and speak.

GARY BLANCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Next is microphone number 7, Pako, General Conference.

PAKO MOKGWANE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm very excited about the changes that are being brought to the youth section of the *Church Manual*. I think this will add decorum and cohesion to the Youth Ministry at the local church where the work needs to happen, and I want to point out that Youth Ministry is not a babysitting ministry or program. It is there to help people, young people, get into the work to be disciplined, to embrace the mission and be sent out. And so, this is why we need to fast forward the transition into adulthood and get them to work for the Lord as we all believe that the youth will finish the work, and so the more we cut the age to lower ages, the more we can fast forward this process. And for PCM this is a ministry for Public Campus Ministry, a ministry for students in public campuses, and it is not only for students, it is also for staff and that's why we have to add the plus to that age classification. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We go to microphone number 7, David Trim, General Conference.

DAVID TRIM: Brother Chairman, I move to call the previous question.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you for helping the chair. Let's vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: Just as a reminder this is just to cease debate. We will now vote. You will see we fixed the ballot so it will open now, Mr. Chairman. Three minutes.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. Let's start voting. And as it was said, we are only voting to stop the debate. And the actual issue will be brought back, and we ask our brother who actually made the motion if he would like to come to the meeting and maybe to express it more clearly. And if you can forgive me because I misheard you, I will be very thankful. Well, maybe it's really time to stand up. Well, 45 seconds or 42 left.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, 1,300 people have voted.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. We will give a few more seconds. All right. Let's call the vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. We're closing the vote. 1,339 voted. Results will be displayed now.

ARTUR A STELE: All right, 97 percent voted to stop the discussion, and as we said, the item will be brought back after the committee discusses it. Let's move to the next item.

GERSON P SANTOS: Thank you, Pastor Chair. As some of these items are related and we skipped two, we also need to skip the next one. So, I would ask permission, Pastor Chair, to skip 422 and go directly to 423. The reference number is 419. It's the item 423 in your agenda. I know that some of you are getting tired at this time of the afternoon, but let me tell you this. We are halfway through. And it looks like we may be able to make it until tomorrow noon because we meet to review those items to refer back to the committee tomorrow during lunchtime. So, let's go back again to item number 423. This is a very simple item and hopefully it will be easy for you to understand the need that it is presented.

The rationale behind is the amendment adds a direct quotation from the referenced text. So, it's a Bible text that was quoted in the *Church Manual*, but we didn't have the full Bible text, and now we are recommending that we add the full text of Galatians 3, verse 28. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." So, we are bringing to you the full text of Galatians 3, verse 28, to be included in the text in the section "No Wall or Partition." I move, Pastor Chair.

ARTUR A STELE: All right, it has been moved. Is there a second? Oh, yes. Thank you very much. Let's now see if there is someone who wishes to speak. There is no one in the queue, no one Zoom. Let's proceed to vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. We are opening up the ballot as we speak. Individuals should be able to vote here momentarily. Mr. Chairman, the ballot is open. People may vote beginning now.



ARTUR A STELE: All right. Let's vote and submit.

[Voting]

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. We are closing now. Mr. Chairman, 1,285 cast ballots. We'll see the results now.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Strong support. Thank you. It is carried. Next item.

GERSON P SANTOS: Very well. Pastor Chair. Let's go to number 424. We are dealing now with the area of membership records, reference number 401-22. The rationale behind this recommendation is this amendment removes the confusing term "retired membership list" and clarifies that there should only be one membership record. I believe this is clear, but I'm going to restate or paraphrase. We have just one list with the records of the church members. And to clarify this possible confusion in some areas, this is the amendment for Chapter 6, Membership, page 55 in the *Church Manual*. "The church should have one current, regularly updated membership record. Names are added or removed only on the vote of the church, at death, or at the member's request." I move, Pastor Chair.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. It has been moved. Is there a second? Yes, a number of seconds. Thank you very much. I see a point of order, microphone number 5.

DANIEL JENNAH: Yes, thank you, Brother Chairman. I just want to make a general observation. Twice somebody has called the previous question in order to cease the debate. I don't want to leave here with the impression that sometimes we don't want to have debates. I know time is moving on and we need time to deal with all the important matters, but it was obvious that each time it was somebody from the GC. So, I feel a bit uncomfortable, and I don't want you, either, to feel uncomfortable. Because if somebody from the GC supports the chair like that, maybe somebody could have the impression that you don't want us to debate. And if we have called the world Church to deal with these important matters, it will be good if we have a bit more time to exchange. And so, we want all to be proud of our Church because we are not afraid of any debate, because we want to be transparent, and we want to

help the next generation to be proud of their Church because we can stand firm, face any idea, any discussion, and we want all to move forward. I am proud of my Church. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Daniel, for this remark. I think you see, when people feel that their item was discussed already enough and they moved the previous question, you have probably seen that it was overwhelmingly supported by more than 96, 97 percent. It means that the body itself felt it was enough. So, there is, in spite of whoever moves the previous question, we always ask the body to vote. And if there is a desire to continue, then the body can express it. But we also don't want a small group to keep the clear majority handicapped. But you are very right. We would really like everyone who is willing and feels it's enough to feel the freedom to call the previous question when it was felt that it was discussed enough.

But, you know, the discussions are very helpful. And dear sisters and brothers, don't be discouraged when you see that we have here a discussion for, against, and so on. This is very healthy. We should be able as brothers and sisters to discuss, and then we come to a decision. So don't feel discouraged if you feel that there are so many speaking in one direction and the other. This is very healthy. When many opinions are discussed and then a decision is made, this is healthy. Thank you very much. We have a number of those who would like to speak to the motion. The first one is Niklas from TED, and microphone number 2.

NIKLAS RANTANEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the stricken-out sentence on line 15 and 16 of page 91 is removed as proposed, there remains no mention regarding keeping a list of retired members. If I understand correctly, the amended first sentence on lines 13 and 14 is trying to say that there should be one and only one membership record, which also includes necessary information on retired members but excludes a separate list of such members. However, the first sentence could also be very easily understood to concern current members only and to say nothing about keeping a separate list of retired members, thus there is a real risk that some or many churches understand the amendments indicate

keeping up of such lists is no longer forbidden or discouraged. Currently the *Church Manual* clearly forbids such lists, but if that clause is not merely edited but completely removed, we are at least inadvertently sending the message that such lists are now allowed. At least for the unions operating inside the European Union, data privacy is one of the most important compliance issues. We need to minimize the amount of unnecessary personal information that is circulating inside the church. And I would appreciate any support the *Church Manual* can offer in governing the local churches regarding this. In my opinion, even the current version is less problematic and more helpful than the proposed one. I am convinced there must be better, clearer, and less ambiguous wording to achieve the same rationale. Therefore, I move to refer this item back to the committee. I move the motion.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Now I really heard you well. I know there is quite an echo from here, but this time you made it so clear that even through the echo I got it. Is there a second? I see some seconds. This was a motion to refer. And the motion to refer is debatable. And I will ask if there are any questions, observations.

TODD MCFARLAND: An individual will need to scan in just a second now. All right. People can scan in to [speak to] the motion to refer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ARTUR A STELE: Yes. And you wanted to say something?

GERSON P SANTOS: Sure. I'd love to. Thank you, Pastor Chair. I really appreciate the thorough work of the speaker and we can see that he did his homework and read the recommendations carefully. However, I want to state that the *Church Manual* is for worldwide application. For the local church or a specific area of the world where there is a special need it is still the responsibility of the local church to decide how to deal with this situation. The reason the last line was deleted was exactly to clarify. When you try to explain the same thing and repeat it again, people may start getting confused in some places when you see "retired" they think about those who are already not working. They stopped working because they are aging. In other places they keep a list of those who have already died and this, as much

as we love and cherish the memory of our loved ones, would be a theological problem if we keep records of those that already died as part of the membership roll. So, there are many reasons that we decided to clarify this to make it simple and shorter. So again, Pastor Chair, that's the intention and recommendation, and of course we respect if there is any specific reason at the local church to operate in a different way, this should not be the rule for the others, even though we respect, and again the authority will be over the local church again. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. I don't see anyone wishing to speak, then we will proceed to vote, and the motion was to refer it to the committee. If you're in favor, you vote "yes." If you are against it, you vote "no." Please let us proceed.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right. Mr. Chairman. It takes a moment to open up the ballot. It takes a moment to create that, and we will be able to vote momentarily.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. It's open.

ARTUR A STELE: It's open. Let us vote. If you would like to refer it back, you vote "yes." If you would like not to refer it, you vote "no." And don't forget to submit it.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, we are at 1,285 ballots.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Looks like we have achieved our number that usually we have had this afternoon. Let's close it.

TODD MCFARLAND: Closing now, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, 1,300 votes exactly. It will be displayed here momentarily.

ARTUR A STELE: Well, the motion looks like it fails. We will continue the discussion. Neji Ouni, Middle East and North Africa Union Mission (MENAUM), microphone number 3.

NEJI OUNI: Mr. Chair, I'm not against the motion, but I just want to put it again on the screen.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Let us ask to put the motion on the screen. You mean the main motion; right?

NEJI OUNI: I mean the paragraph that we need to change.

ARTUR A STELE: All right.

NEJI OUNI: I think in Membership Record—The church should have one current, regularly updated membership record. Names are added or removed only on the vote of the church, at death, or at the member's request." I think we should change a little bit the wording of this phrase. We should say, "Names are added or removed only on the vote of the church, at the membership request, or at death." I don't know if you see what I mean. Because when we say in this way that removed only at the vote of the church or at death, at the member's request, a dead person cannot request.

ARTUR A STELE: Here is a "or at the member's request," so a living one, either when he's dead it is removed or when he's living but requests.

NEJI OUNI: Yeah, that's why we should advance the other one before the second one. We reverse them.

ARTUR STELE: Okay, Gerson? Thank you very much.

GERSON P SANTOS: I think this is a good idea. However, this is why we have a comma there, Pastor Chair. We actually have three categories. One, delete the name because it was voted by the church. A second category, if someone passed away. And a third category will be if a member requests to take his name out. So, we are talking about three different categories. And this is why we have a comma after each one of them.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. We'll go to microphone number 8, Nnamdi Onyenmuru.

NNAMDI ONYENMURU: Thank you very much. You got it. I'm looking at the area of removing member's names from the membership of the church. One is at death, one is at request. And I have to ask, what happens when somebody needs to be removed by discipline of his membership? Does the name remain or is he removed? What happens when a member is disciplined by removal of membership?

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Gerson, can you respond?

GERSON P SANTOS: Sure. I'd love to. Thank you. I believe the previous speaker is referring to the first category that we have there in the list. That's the vote of the church. As different levels of disciplinary actions, the last resource is to take the name out of the membership, and that's what is listed here, remove the name on the vote of the church. That's what the speaker is referring to.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Thank you very much.

NNAMDI ONYENMURU: I believe the sentence should be looked at and see how it can be better clarified by adding that as to one is disciplined by this membership. You have an answer of removal of membership. A person dies or requests to take off the membership of the church or the person has been disciplined by this membership. I submit it.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. Gerson?

GERSON P SANTOS: I'm taking notes.

ARTUR A STELE: You're taking notes. Thank you very much.

GERSON P SANTOS: Thank you. I appreciate it.

ARTUR A STELE: We go to microphone number 6, Abelardo Rivas, Iowa-Missouri Conference, NAD.

ABELARDO RIVAS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mine is more like a suggestion for the order, not related to the motion so can I say that now or later?

ARTUR A STELE: It doesn't relate to motion?

ABELARDO RIVAS: No, it doesn't relate to the motion. It's more like *Rules of Order*.

ARTUR A STELE: Okay. Let us take care of the motion and if you could stay by, okay?

ABELARDO RIVAS: Okay, no problem.

ARTUR A STELE: Microphone number 5, John Page, NAD.

JOHN PAGE: Mr. Chairman, I would like to move the previous question.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you. A previous question is called. Is there a second? I see a number of seconds. Thank you very much. Let's go to vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. We will open that ballot here momentarily.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much.

TODD MCFARLAND: It's open, Mr. Chairman. Individuals can now vote on moving the previous question.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. The motion is to call the previous question. If you want to stop debate, you vote "yes." If you want to continue, vote "no."

And this will be the final action before we stop our decision making this afternoon. We will continue after dinner at seven o'clock. But we will start at seven with worship. So, at seven o'clock, we will start with a devotional. And after the devotional we will continue with our business session.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, at around two minutes left we've got 1,164 ballots cast.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Maybe while we are waiting there was our brother standing aside, he wanted to speak not to the motion. Maybe this is a good time to do it, to use these two minutes.

ABELARDO RIVAS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It seems like during this debate we are learning on the go; so there has been a lot of confusion about how to make a point of order, how to make a motion. My suggestion is if we can actually start this meeting with some kind of training in how to conduct the conversation so we can use better effective way of the time that we have instead of just learning on the go. So probably some examples of how to make a point of order, what is a point of order, how to make a motion, how to make a move, the terminology we need to use, I think that will help us to have better communication between us. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you very much. It's a really good suggestion. I think we have put in every delegate's bag the *Rules of Order*. And they are in three or four languages, right?

TODD MCFARLAND: Four languages, yes.

ARTUR A STELE: Four languages. But, if there needs to be additional training, probably we need to look at it. Thank you very much.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, we are at 1,234 ballots cast. I will say for those interested, there are various parliamentary trainings available from various organizations which I go to. It's a fascinating time. Mr. Chairman, we have 1,240 votes cast.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Probably we can close the vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. We are closing the ballot. And it looks like 1,250 people voted. There are the results.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. As you can see, overwhelmingly people felt we needed to cease the debate, so we proceed immediately to vote on the main motion, right?

TODD MCFARLAND: Exactly, Mr. Chairman. We are opening that here now. All right, Mr. Chairman. Voting on the main motion is now available for all delegates.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Let us vote for the motion.

TODD MCFARLAND: Just as a reminder to everyone, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee will be meeting in room 160 tonight so if there are any items there, please meet there for those items that were referred.

ARTUR A STELE: All right.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, we are up to over a thousand ballots so far.

ARTUR A STELE: Very good. I see people are already leaving, probably. We have to call the end of the vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: Well, Mr. Chairman, we are just a little over 1,100.

ARTUR A STELE: Okay. Let's wait till we get 1,200.

TODD MCFARLAND: I guess people could vote then leave if they wanted. Would be fine.



ARTUR A STELE: They can vote; right? Thank you very much to all who are standing by and helping us to make some progress.

GERSON P SANTOS: Mr. Chair?

ARTUR A STELE: Yes.

GERSON P SANTOS: Just ask that we wait a few more seconds, I just want to say I'll be back tonight. We'll continue tonight.

ARTUR STELE: Yes, at seven o'clock we will start with the devotional, and after the devotional, we will return to probably a Nominating Committee report and other Church Manual items.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, we're up to 1,176 ballots cast.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Let us probably call the vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: All right, Mr. Chairman. We are closing the vote as we speak. We got up to 1,181. It will be displayed here shortly.

ARTUR A STELE: All right. Overwhelmingly supported, it is taken care of. Thank you, Gerson. And thank you to all of you. We will now finish our afternoon session with a prayer. And we will ask our secretary, Claude Richli, to have a prayer. Let us stand for prayer, please.

[Prayer by Claude Richli.]

[End of afternoon session.]