

ELEVENTH BUSINESS MEETING

Sixty-First General Conference Session, June 9, 2022, 2:00 p.m.

[General Conference Corporation member meeting was held.]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Good afternoon, good evening, and good night for some of you who are following us online. Welcome to the afternoon business session. We are convening now as a business session to continue with the items that are here for us. We had our opening prayer, and we will proceed. I mean the prayer was offered during the GC Corporation meeting, so, we will proceed. Thus far God has been with us, and we want to thank Him and glorify Him. You know, each time we come together as we do, we have His promise. When He has repeatedly said, "I will be with you." Therefore, we are not alone even as we transact the business of the Church.

We will now proceed with agenda item number 123, the Three Angels' Messages project. Elder Stele.

ARTUR A STELE: Dear delegates, we will provide now a video report from the Three Angels' Messages Committee, and at the end, you will receive a book that was just produced by the Ellen G White Estate, the compilation on the Three Angels' Messages.

[A video was shown.]

ARTUR A STELE: Brother Chair, we will invite the ushers to give out the book that was prepared by the Ellen G White Estate, a compilation on the Three Angels' Messages. So, ushers, if you could be so kind to distribute the books to the delegates.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Excellent. Indeed, a great privilege to be invited by God Himself to partner with Him, first to leave the Three Angels' Messages; secondly, to lovingly proclaim that message to the world. You know what? I will go. And I know I am not alone. Let us go. As you receive these books, this is an invitation and an encouragement for us collectively here and in the churches where we came

from to invite everyone to participate in giving a loud sound to the Three Angels' Messages. The item was just before us as an invitation and as encouragement, not intended for any action or a discussion. So as the books are being distributed, we will proceed to item 124. Again, Elder Steele.

ARTUR A STELE: We have a very nice, interesting, important tradition. Every time a General Conference meets in Session, we have a statement on the Holy Scriptures. We would like every member, indeed the whole world to know that we are people of the Book, that the Bible is our foundation, and we have prepared a statement. This statement was voted on by the Annual Council, by the Executive Committee and recommended to the Session. Please keep in mind that the goal of the statement is not to say everything we know or want to say about the Bible, because we do it every Session, but every Session we pick one or two aspects that we want to emphasize. And so, Brother Chair, if it's okay with you, I would like to invite the director of the Biblical Research Institute, Dr. Elias de Souza to read the statement on the Bible, the Resolution on the Holy Scriptures.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Please.

ELIAS DE SOUZA: Resolution on the Holy Bible. As delegates to the 2022 General Conference Session in St Louis, Missouri, we express our conviction that the Bible is the inspired and revealed Word of God. Through the Holy Scriptures, God has revealed Himself and His will to humanity. The whole Bible is inspired and must be understood as a whole in order to arrive at correct conclusions as to the truth of any revealed topic. The Bible is reliable in what it affirms. Its record of creation in six literal days, the fall of human beings, a global flood to destroy wickedness and preserve a remnant, Christ's earthly life, death, and resurrection, as well as God's numerous interventions in history for the salvation of human beings are trustworthy reports of God's acts in history. Luke 24, verse 27; Hebrews 1, verse 1 and 2; II Peter 1:21. Prophetically the fulfillment of predicted events in accordance with prophetic time periods establishes confidence in the Bible as a unique witness to divine truth unlike any other religious book. Isaiah 46, verse 9 and 10; Daniel 2:7-8, Luke 24, verse 44; II Peter 1:19 and 20.

We believe that the Bible is the prophetic Word of God and through the prophets of the Old Testament, the apostles of the New Testament, and especially through His Son, Jesus Christ, God has revealed how He will act for the salvation of human beings and execute judgment on wickedness.

We commit ourselves to prayerfully study and follow the Bible, the living and effective Word of God. It's profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. It stands forever as a witness to God's will, His law, His thoughts, His purposes for human beings, and for the world, and contains the treasures of eternal wisdom and grace. Isaiah 40, verse 8; 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 13; II Timothy 3, verses 16 and 17.

Its principles and teachings are applicable in all times, all places, all languages, all cultures for all people. It speaks credibly and relevantly today as it has in the past and will continue to speak as long as time shall last.

We also believe that the Bible leads us to a living relationship with God through Jesus Christ. And by the Holy Spirit the Bible speaks directly to each person to reveal the plan of salvation and restore believers into the image of God. Thus, the Bible stands as the norm for all religious experience inasmuch as it reveals and teaches the truth and explains how its effects are manifested on the intellect, feelings, and affections. Hebrews 4, verse 12; Galatians 5, verse 22 and 23.

We express our deep gratitude to the Lord because in the Scriptures we find hope to live amidst the challenges of the world. The Bible tells of God's plan to bestow immortality on His people at the second coming of Christ and ultimately, after the millennium in Heaven, to put an end to sin and sinners forever and establish righteousness in the new earth. Psalm 119, verse 105; Romans 15, verse 4; Hebrews 4, verse 12; James 1, verse 18.

ARTUR A STELE: Chair, I move the Resolution on the Holy Bible. I have moved it.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: It has been moved. I have heard a second. And, therefore, the floor is open. And on microphone number 2, Wayne Krause, from the South Pacific Division, you have the floor.

WAYNE KRAUSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe strongly in the authority of Scripture and that it's the inspired Word of God. I also believe in the spiritual gift of prophecy. But I will not be voting in favor of this resolution. I appreciate the fact that some things are left out. But when we make such statements, we do tell the world what is important. And in line 13, for example, we are told about the six literal days of creation, but the Sabbath is not mentioned. So, it is telling the world what is important to us. I believe in the 28 Fundamentals, and I think whenever we make statements expanding on the 28 Fundamentals, we get into a bit of trouble. And I think this is an example.

On line 27 there is a quote, remembering this resolution is on the Scripture, and there is a quote from II Timothy which is taken completely out of context. It says that this is doctrine for reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, and full stop. But in the Bible, it's not that. These things are to equip people for work of service, and they are not just to give doctrine or reproof or correction. I really believe that if every Session we're making a statement about Scripture or the Spirit of Prophecy, wouldn't it be great if we actually had a statement on Jesus Christ? He is the Author and Finisher of our faith, He is above Scripture, He is above the Spirit of Prophecy, but I'd love the world and our Church to see Jesus Christ emphasized as one of our statements as well. Thank you.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much. We will go to microphone number 1, Dianne Sika-Paotonu. Bear with me if I mispronounce your name, from South New Zealand Conference, SPD.

DIANNE SIKA-PAOTONU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Firstly, I'd just like to say thank you for all the hard work that's gone into preparing this resolution on behalf of us all. Thank you also to the respective teams that have been involved. I'd like to just propose a couple of minor amendments, if that's okay. And the first of which occurs on line 11. And there is a portion here that reads, the whole Bible is inspired and must be understood as a whole. And I was simply proposing that for a bit of variation that the first use of the word "whole" could be replaced with "entire." The second proposed amendment is

in line 16 where I'm just suggesting that a comma could be placed after the words "human beings" and again just to help with the flow of the sentences here.

In line 21, which reads, "We believe that the Bible is a prophetic Word of God and through the prophets . . ." And again, I'm just proposing a minor amendment that the word "that" be inserted between "and" and "through" just to help with emphasis the sections here, within this particular sentence.

And then the final amendment that I was proposing was that pertaining to line 34, which reads, "We also believe that the Bible leads us to a living relationship. . ." And I was just proposing that the word "into" could substitute for the word "to" so that the sentence then reads, "We also believe that the Bible leads us into a living relationship through Jesus Christ." I just thought that might be more reflective of what the original intent was of the sentence because there's quite a bit in there so again just some minor suggestions and just really hope that these are helpful. Thank you for all the hard work that's gone into this.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you. We'll take those under advisement. We go to microphone number 2, Reinhard Gallos from Northern Rhenish-Westphalian Conference, EUD. You have the floor.

REINHARD GALLOS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm very concerned about one point in this resolution. And as you can see, I want to point out that I'm a big fan of creation. That's why I'm wearing this shirt. But I do not agree to change words here of the creation report like literal days in line 13 because my creation report and this Bible never mentions literally. The creation report says; so, the evening and the morning were the first, the second, or the third day. That implies that the biblical term "day" is talking about day only, not including the night, while when we talk about literal day, in today's vernacular speech implies a 24-hour day. Not only that, this wording does not match to the biblical meaning. It also brings back to all discussion about the 24-hour per day creation through the back door, which we thought we had overcome in the past because of good reasons.

I wonder if we still have this Adventist spirit which belief our pilgrim fathers had. And this one was after the Great Disappointment they went back to the Bible and studied the Word of God and left it as it was. Why, the Bible clearly states in Revelation 22:18 and following that we should not add any word or take away any word from the Book of this prophecy because otherwise we would be taken out of the Book of Life. Dear sisters and brothers, we will be made responsible when we are changing the Word of God. Why aren't we trustful that God has inspired his message so that it was written down in the best possible way it ever could have been? Instead, we are trying to improve the Holy Scripture by citing Scripture in our own statements and adding words to it at the same time. Therefore, I want to speak against this resolution, and I make a move to give this document back to the Administrative Committee in order to remove the word "literally" out of the sentence in line 13. Thank you.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: All right. The Chair recognizes that you have made a motion to send this back to the Administrative Committee. And the Chair would like to recognize that but make a request. Because we have some standing on the line, so that we can register the observations that they have even before we bring your motion on the floor, if you will allow the Chair to do that, we will appreciate it and then we can take it after that.

REINHARD GALLOS: Of course. Thank you.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Microphone number 5, Qedumusa Mathonsi, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

QEDUMUSA MATHONSI: Thank you so much, Elder Chair. I stand here to passionately stand with the motion, especially that the times we are living in we have a challenge with accepting the Bible as the Word of God. That's where we hear in statements such as, "Jesus is above the Bible" which I don't believe because the Bible says—the Bible reveals Jesus Himself. Jesus is in the Bible. The Bible is the vehicle of the message of Jesus. Therefore, I think I move strongly, I support strongly this motion that let's remind ourselves, because I have seen even during our discussions that there are areas that we

love quoting scripture in, but there are some areas where the Bible is very explicit, but we are scared of quoting it. And so, this comes as a reminder of us returning to the basics of the inspired Word of God.

Thank you.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much. I'll go to microphone number 2, Sven Onstring for the South Pacific Division.

SVEN ONSTRING: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to speak about this subject. Just with a warm sense of humor I also note that there's no words General Conference Session or St Louis and Missouri in the Bible. My point is this, is that we're not trying to write the inspired Word of God here. We simply are summarizing our beliefs. And in fact, if we look at the Fundamental Beliefs, the words tobacco and narcotic drugs are not there as well. We're simply trying to clarify what we believe. So, I would move that we retain the word "literal" in that phrase, six literal days. But there is another clarification that we do need as well. For example, professor John Lennox from Oxford University has written a book *Six Days to Divide the World* and in that book he actually clarifies that he does believe in six literal days but he believes those days are spaced out with millions of years of periods, which is effectively a position known as progressive creationism, and so I'd like to recommend that if we're looking to summarize what we have in the Fundamental Beliefs, there's a clarification in the Fundamental Beliefs which needs to be inserted here, which could be done very simply, which is, "six literal, consecutive days," which I believe is a good summary of what we believe in terms of the Fundamental Beliefs which is consistent with both the Bible and what we have in the Spirit of Prophecy as well. I'd like to recommend that amendment to this resolution. Thank you.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much. We have, I think, four more speakers who want to go to speak and therefore after that I will recognize the motion that was made, and we will proceed. So, on Zoom 101 we have Victor Singh from the Southern Asia Division.

VICTOR SINGH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to commend the Secretariat and the board for putting up this wonderful resolution and I would really commend them that they have taken the stand to put the six literal days there, and the Church has been doing that year after year and thank you very much. It's a wonderful summary as our previous speakers have said. Our stand of the Church is very clear on the Bible and we are the Church that is based on the Bible and the Bible alone, and yesterday or day before yesterday when there was a discussion on E G White, there are many people who are trying to put an allegation that our Church doesn't take a stand on the Bible, but our Church has been very consistent to take a firm stand on the Bible. And, Mr. Speaker, I do not agree that this should go back. I mean, it would take a vote on it, allow people to put their expression. The only thing that I request is that our publishing and research institute need to also come up with an app on the Bible. It's high time that we recognize the battle of the Bibles out there to the extent that now even the 1844 sanctuary movement cannot be proved other than KJV. We need to take a stand on the Bible that we are. Otherwise, every church out there now claims that their teachings are based on the Bible. Every church claims that. Whilst we can prove our teachings from the Bible, so can others. So, we need to take a stand on the Bible very clearly. And thank you once again, the Secretariat for coming up with this wonderful, summarized document of the Bible. I support it and I do not wish that it goes back. There is nothing much in it to go back. It is perfectly written. Thank you.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much. Again, English Zoom 101, Karl Archer, North Jamaica Conference, Inter-American Division.

KARL ARCHER: Supporting the original motion, I've intended to move the previous question. I did hear you say we were not going to relate a motion afterward, but my intent was about the previous question on the original motion. So, should I proceed to move the previous question, Mr. Chair?

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: I already recognized that I would take a motion to refer back and I feel it will be unfair if I do not take that at this point; so, the mover of the motion to refer back made the

motion. Is there a second? Okay. It's been seconded. I see no one listed to be on the microphone; so, we are ready to vote.

[Voting]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: We have 650, which is 59 percent voting “yes,” and 449 voting “no,” which is 40.9 votes. So, the motion to refer back carries. That brings us to the end of that agenda. We'll go to item number 125.

ARTUR A STELE: Brother Chair, the next item is on The Statement of Confidence on the Writings of Ellen White, and I would like to ask the secretary to read the statement.

ELBERT KUHN: Thank you, Elder Stele. Statement of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen White. As delegates to the 2022 General Conference Session in St Louis, Missouri, we express our deep gratitude for God's prophetic guidance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Aiming to live “by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God,” we take seriously the biblical passages that teach the abiding nature of the gift of prophecy and promise its end-time manifestation. We recognize the gift of prophecy in the life and ministry of Ellen G White.

We believe that the writings of Ellen G White were inspired by the Holy Spirit and are Christ centered and Bible based. Rather than replacing Scripture, they uplift its normative character, safeguard the Church from “every wind of doctrine,” and offer an inspired guide to Bible passages without exhausting their meaning or preventing further study. They also help us to overcome the human tendency to accept from the Bible what we like and to distort or disregard what we do not like.

We commit ourselves to prayerfully study the writings of Ellen G White with hearts willing to follow the counsels and instructions found therein. Whether individually, in the family, in small groups, in the classroom, or in the church, we believe that the study of her writings brings us closer to God and His infallible Word—the Scriptures—providing us a transforming and faith-uplifting experience.

We rejoice in the Lord for what has already been accomplished in the global and local circulation of the writings of Ellen G White in both printed and electronic formats, including egwwritings.org and related apps. We encourage the continued development of both worldwide and local strategies to foster the circulation and study of her writings in as many languages as possible. The study of these writings is a powerful means to strengthen and prepare God's people to face the challenges of these last days as we approach Christ's soon return.

ARTUR A STELE: Thank you, Brother Chair. I move the Statement of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen White. I have moved it.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Okay. It has been moved. Is there a second? Seconded. All Right. Thank you. On microphone number 2, Terry Johnson, Australian Union Conference SPD.

TERRY JOHNSON: Thank you, Brother Chair. Thirty-seven years ago, at the age of 15, I attended my first General Conference, and I've got to say that I was bored at the time and along with my co-partner in crime, Mr. Eric Sabot, the son of the conference president, we were fashioning airplanes out of paper and trying to land them on the podium where you sit today, sir. One of them landed right in front of the chair on that day, and we rejoiced. It was foolish at the time, and now that I'm a union president I look back and think, what was I thinking? My wife, who is now my wife, was sitting in the dome at the time, and she wondered who the silly man was who was throwing those paper airplanes, and it's a pleasure that we have been married together for 30 years. Good things can come out of the General Conference Session.

Mr. Chair, I believe there is a need for renewed contextual awareness and appreciation of the prophetic heritage that God has gifted the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Yesterday this body voted for the appointment of a Spirit of Prophecy Coordinator in each local church whose primary role will be to promote the importance and right use of the Spirit of Prophecy writings. Mention is made of the notion of the right or proper use, and there is no guidance as to what constitutes proper or improper use of her

writings. Mr. Chairman, what is designed to be a blessing to the local church could become a source of significant tension if we do not put a set of clear, concise guidelines into the hands of our local church leaders. Without clarity, local church leaders could interpret this new initiative differently, and that could lead to increased disunity from one church to the next, even though they may be neighbors. And that is not a good thing coming out of the General Conference.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I move that the Biblical Research Institute and the White Estate of the General Conference produce a document forthwith that will serve as a guideline as to what constitutes proper and improper use of the Spirit of Prophecy writings to strengthen the hand of the offices of the local church and their effort towards a renewed and informed appreciation of the writings of Ellen White.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much. The motion is not in order because of the motion that we have. And we would like to continue with the discussion and take your observation and advisement, unless you have a different observation, Pastor Stele.

ARTUR A STELE: Okay.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: On microphone number 7, Anthony Bosman, General Conference.

ANTHONY BOSMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've already spoken about how the writings of Ellen White have been an incredible gift for my life, they've been a gift for our Church, but I recognize we have critics, critics who say because we take the writings of Ellen White seriously, we must not take the Bible seriously. I appreciate the statement because it makes clear that it is because we take Scripture seriously, we take her inspired writings seriously as well. That's the first paragraph. And in the second paragraph, it's because we take her writings seriously, it affirms our high view of Scripture. However, recognizing that we do have critics, I believe we must exercise clarity in this document, and there's one line I am concerned about. In the second sentence of the second paragraph, "While

affirming that her writings do not replace Scripture and affirming they uplift its normative character,” it goes on to say they offer an inspired guide to Bible passages.

I am afraid some of our critics will latch on to that phrase, “inspired guide,” and when they see that, they will claim that we read Scripture through the lens of Ellen White, that while we believe that Scripture is normative, she is our normative interpreter to Scripture. We do not believe that, though. Ellen White herself said that Scripture interprets itself and that the Bible is to be the only rule to faith and doctrine. Therefore, for the sake of clarity, to prevent any critics from latching on to this, I believe we should slightly rephrase that sentence, “offer an inspired guide to Bible passages,” to the revised language of “offer inspired guidance by invoking Bible passages.” After all, that is what she does. She speaks to us, the Church, offering inspired guidance by invoking Bible passages, but she is not our interpreter to Scripture, we don't treat her that way, and we shouldn't give our critics any ammo to use that against us. I move that we return it to the committee to make that small edit so we can have the utmost clarity on this document. [Applause.]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Chair recognizes the motion. Is there a second? It has been seconded. It's debatable. And we will receive any who may want to speak on this. I don't have the list here as yet, and I see people on microphone—I see somebody on microphone number 1. Just wait a little bit. Clinton Wahlen, microphone number 7, General Conference.

CLINTON WAHLEN: Thank you, Brother Chairman. My question actually can apply to both this referral and to the previous one. If we referred this back to the committee today, would it come back before the Session ends for us to relook at it? Because we've had a number of referrals back to the *Church Manual* Committee, which met today, and those will come back. But I'm not sure this one on the Spirit of Prophecy or the one on the Bible could come back today, or could it?

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: All Right. It's possible, but we are not sure at this point, as yet.

CLINTON WAHLEN: Okay. So, if we would vote in favor of referring, it might not come back to the Session.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: That's possible as well.

CLINTON WAHLEN: So, I would recommend voting against it. Thank you.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you. All Right, microphone number 1, Heraldo Lopes, Mozambique Union Mission, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

HERALDO LOPES: Mr. Chairman, we stay in a very serious moment in this GC Session. What is seen now is very important to the Seventh-day Adventist Church because we have a Fundamental Belief about it. The proposal in all words, in all lines, is according to our Fundamental Beliefs because that as we delegates here, Mr. Chairman, we must support this, we must stay together in this moment with this.

And, Mr. Chairman, we are Seventh-day Adventists. Together we must continue and support this proposal. That is my observation. And please, Mr. Chairman, we must follow according to the proposal. Thank you.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much. English Zoom 101, Rabea Kramp, South German Union Conference, EUD.

RABEA KRAMP: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to speak in favor of this resolution. As you know since yesterday, I'm a big supporter of The Spirit of Prophecy, and I think our greatest problem is not that her writings are overemphasized in our churches but that they are either ignored or falsely used. So, I recommend this biblical-based approach of her writings as mentioned in this resolution, and I especially like the descriptions in line 23 and 24 that her writings are a safeguard and a guide, because I cannot imagine, and I don't want to imagine where we would stand as a Church without this amazing treasure of her books; so please let's support this resolution and let's not refer back to the committee. Thank you.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much. Daniel Medina Melgoza, microphone number 8, West Mexican Conference, Inter-America Division.

DANIEL MEDINA MELGOZA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can I be translated from Spanish?

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Go ahead. I think we have a translator here.

DANIEL MEDINA MELGOZA: I can't remember a happier day than the day that I got baptized accepting Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. And that day they asked me about Fundamental Beliefs. And I accepted every single one of them. If I had to sign on all of them, every single day, I would do it again. And here we're only talking about our belief number 18. Something which I have already accepted the moment I got baptized. As well as everyone that got baptized that is in this room. So, I suggest that we accept this in the same way that we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Because Jesus Christ is manifested in the ministry of Ellen White, and I see it in my Church and in my life. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you. And I take your comments as being opposed to referring this back. Microphone number 5, Sandra Colon, Central California Conference of SDA Church, North America Division. Please.

SANDRA COLON: Thank you I believe that as we already voted to send back the proclamation on the Bible itself and we know that that might not get returned for us to vote on, then it would be a dishonor to the memory of Ellen White to vote through a proclamation on her writings without first having a proclamation on the Word of God. I think she would be highly offended in us doing that since she always said she is a lesser light to the greater light; so, I vote that we should send this back, and I'd like to move a question on the motion.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Question on the motion has been moved. Is there a second? Seconded. Thank you.

ARTUR A STELE: Brother Chair?

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Yes, please.

ARTUR A STELE: I just would like to inform the body that both statements, the Statement on the Bible and the Statement on the Confidence in the Writings of Ellen White have been voted by the Annual Council. But previously and after that they have been presented to each year-end meeting of every division, and some recommendations have come in, some changes have been made, and the final version was approved again by the Executive Committee. So, this is a recommendation from such a process.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you. That is valuable information. I appreciate that. The previous question was called, not debatable and therefore we will proceed to vote on the motion to refer back.

[Voting]

The results are 1,052 votes vote "yes," 148 vote "no." So, the motion to call the previous question carries and therefore we will proceed back to the main motion.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: So now we go back to the original motion to refer back to committee. If you vote "yes," then the item will be referred back. If you vote "no," we will proceed to the main motion as it was presented.

[Voting]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: The motion failed with 507 who voted "yes" and 723 voted "no," so we will go back to the main motion. On to microphone number 2, Brett Townend, South Queensland Conference, SPD.

BRETT TOWNEND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Coming from Australia we're proud that Ellen White did some of her best work in our country, and so there's much about me that wants to support this statement. My father's personal testimony of conversion involved reading of the book *Steps to Christ*. I've just cycled 1,200 kilometers to be here at this Session giving out the *Great Controversy* along the way, and that was a wonderful experience. So, while I want to uphold the ministry of Ellen White, I

also feel that if the statement wasn't to be referred back, I feel that to support the ministry of Ellen White I must vote against this statement because in my understanding she herself would not support it. We've heard this week that we can trust the Bible, and that I believe. The Bible is supreme. She herself says, here “. . . is Divine authority, which is supreme in matters of faith.” So, while it's supreme, my question is, is it sufficient? She says in the *Great Controversy*, “In His word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation.” But I know that back home, at least, you can preach the Word of God and expound from the Scriptures, and someone will say to you, well, it was a good sermon, but you didn't quote Ellen White. In other words, the inference in Scripture is not sufficient. It can't stand alone, and it needs supplementing. And I would like to say, it doesn't need supporting, it doesn't need supplementing. The scripture can stand alone. And I don't think the statement does enough to outline the relationship between Scripture as supreme and sufficient and the writings of Ellen White.

And I'll close with a question—I see I'm out of time—when we say the writings of Ellen White, what are we meaning? Is it letters to personal friends about their health? Is it letters to her children? Is it the compilations, or just what are we referring to by her writings?

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you. We will go on to microphone number 2 again, Steve Goods, Western Australia Conference, SPD.

STEVE GOODS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I feel that I have to vote against this motion because it goes against what we believe and goes against what Ellen White taught herself. “The Seventh-day Adventist Church accepts the Bible as her only creed and holds certain Fundamental Beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.” That's the introduction to the 28 fundamentals. The statement is confusing because it appears to give Ellen White superior interpretation of Scripture. Ellen White herself would say, don't quote her but quote the Bible. Our pioneers based their teachings on Scripture. In 1909 at the last General Conference, Ellen White spoke in sermon form on 11 occasions. This was a lady, I will note. She was 81 years of age. And when she spoke on the last Sabbath, she walked away from the desk,

came back, held up the Bible with a trembling hand, and said, “Brethren and sisters, I commend unto you this book.” And I fear that this statement is placing her writings almost on an equal with the Scriptures. I believe it's an unbalanced approach and we're repeating a mistake we've made in the past, and those of us who went through the 1970s and 1980s, there will be a correction if we don't get the balance between Scripture and Ellen White correctly. I think it's going to lead to bad theology and certainly I think that our preaching should be based on Scripture as Ellen White would suggest. You know that someone gave us—you gave us, actually, this statement, a letter from Ellen White from the 1988 Bible conference.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: And your time is up.

STEVE GOODS: I just rest my case.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you. Vasilii Stefaniv on Zoom, Russian Zoom 105, West Siberian Mission, ESD.

VASILII STEFANIV: Please, translator, speak for me.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Yes, you have a translator.

VASILII STEFANIV: I'm speaking in favor of this statement, and I believe it fully supports what we as Seventh-day Adventists believe. I can't really understand why it is that some delegates are speaking against what we believe, against our Fundamental Beliefs. As an example, we just referred back to the committee the statement on the Bible, but both the Bible and Ellen G. White writings speak about literal days of creation. It is one of the Fundamental Beliefs because we believe in God as a Creator. It is the fundamental for our belief in the fourth commandment about Sabbath. If we go as far as to reject the six literal days of creation, by doing so we reject the law of God. And it is my strong conviction that if we do not agree and do not accept these resolutions and statements, in doing so we kind of reject our faith.

And there's one more thing I would like to add. It seems to me that there are some people who are trying to find some things in the statements that they would like to put in that they seemingly lack.

Shouldn't we just say—shouldn't we just be looking instead for things that we agree with and say amen to statements like these? So, I'm speaking in favor of supporting our Fundamental Beliefs and follow on to do so.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much. Microphone number 1, Oliveiros Pino Ferreira Junior, Sao Paulo Valley Conference SAD.

OLIVEIROS PINTO FERREIRA JUNIOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It might be a good opportunity to remind us what a resolution or statement is. These are not documents that make attempts to be exhaustive about the themes. They're not trying to rewrite Fundamental Beliefs. Both the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy have been abundantly covered in Fundamental Belief 1 and 18. What these documents do, they cover aspects that right now in the world are under attack. And like everybody's brother who's speaking here this afternoon, I also speak from my own context and perspective and from reading both texts, Bible texts and Spirit of Prophecy texts this afternoon, I can assure it's all right on what's going on. And it's interesting that both themes, Bible and Spirit of Prophecy have to do with epistemology, which is the ground and core foundation of Adventism, the source of knowledge. We have long established that all our main knowledge comes from revelation. So, it's a period where, yes, of course, the Bible is sufficient, but maybe the Bible is not being preached, maybe our theology being appreciated has not been sufficient, thus we need the Spirit of Prophecy. The Spirit of Prophecy is given in the Bible in a context where the dragon personally fights and makes war against God's people. So, we have a special weapon, and we can ill afford to make no use of this weapon which gives us special information, classified information to guide us into a world in the times we live in. Ellen G White's not greater than the Bible. She says so herself. She's for the end of time. The Bible is for all times. So, for the sake of maintaining our Fundamental Beliefs 1 and 18, I surely speak in favor of this motion. Thank you.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much. Microphone number 2, Johannes Bochmann, Berlin-Central German Conference, EUD.

JOHANNES BOCHMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to come back to some points that were already mentioned by other speakers that were about our priorities. I do believe that we express our priorities by making statements or by not making certain statements. And I am somewhat concerned as some of my fellow delegates have expressed that we are possibly about to vote on a statement on the writings of Ellen White, but possibly we do not know if and when the committee will return with the statement on the Holy Bible, not on the Bible. And therefore, I understand that this body has taken the decision not to refer the statement on Ellen White's writings back to the committee. However, I move to table this item that we have on the floor until a vote has been taken on the resolution on the Holy Bible. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Okay. The motion is to call the previous question. It has been seconded. We are ready to vote.

[Voting]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Okay, 642 votes say "yes" and 619 say "no." The motion carries, and the item is tabled. Thank you. I see Randy Robinson on microphone number 5, North America Division. I couldn't take you while the voting was in process. You have the floor. Point of order.

RANDY ROBINSON: Thank you, Brother Chair. I was trying to make a statement to make sure that it was understood that it was not a vote to just table the motion but only to table it until the Statement of Scripture came back. But having said that, I wanted to speak to this statement just by saying that it seems as I listened to what happens in the room that there are those who feel that those of us who have concerns with the statement are opposed to Ellen White, to her writings, or to the need to remind ourselves on an ongoing basis of the importance she has to our Church. I can't speak for everyone, but that does not represent me. I understand clearly the need to come back periodically and affirm and contextualize the affirmation, our appreciation for, our commitment to, and our

understanding of Ellen White and her writings. For me, the issue is not that. For me, the issue is some of the content of the statement. Because of the limitations of time, let me just take one sentence—

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: And I will limit you because yours was a point of order.

RANDY ROBINSON: Okay, I understand.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you.

RANDY ROBINSON: May I just ask, will we speak any more to this motion then?

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Now that the motion is tabled, we'll wait until the time it comes back.

RANDY ROBINSON: Very good. Thank you very much.

ARTUR A STELE: Brother Chair, there is a possibility to bring the Statement on the Bible back. If someone from those who voted to refer it is willing to make a motion to reintroduce the issue, to reconsider.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: We have a point of order from Kayle De Waal. I hope I pronounced that right. Trans-European Division. Microphone number 1.

KAYLE DE WAAL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I do need your guidance if this is indeed a point of order. I'm grateful that we have our Church leadership at the podium. And I would like to suggest, Mr. Chair, that while I recognize the need to bring to the Session the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen White from time to time, I want to suggest very humbly, Mr. Chair, that this tradition cease.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: That's not a point of order. The chair will rule it as out of order. Please find an appropriate time to do that. Thank you.

KAYLE DE WAAL: Thank you very much. I'm glad I could make my statement, nonetheless. We all love Scripture. We all love Ellen White. We have 28 Fundamental Beliefs that we all cherish. We give 50, 60, 70 hours a week for the mission of this Church that we all love. Mr. Chair, it seems almost immature that we need to continue to defend ourselves when we get up. We all love Scripture. We all love the writings of Ellen White.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Please, please, it is not a point of order. Please cooperate with the chair. Thank you very much. On microphone number 1, Oliveiros Pinto Ferreira Junior, Sao Paulo Valley Conference, SAD.

OLIVEIROS PINTO FERREIRA JUNIOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move we bring back the discussion on the Resolution of the Bible.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: How did you vote?

TODD MCFARLAND: The gentleman has to indicate—it can only be brought by a person who voted in favor of the motion to refer.

OLIVEIROS PINTO FERREIRA JUNIOR: I voted in favor of the motion to refer.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, this motion is debatable. This is a motion to reconsider. The effect of this motion will be, only if it passes, to bring up again the motion to refer. So that's the only thing it does. And comments should be limited to the wisdom of reconsidering it, not on the main merits. It is debatable.

OLIVEIROS PINTO FERREIRA JUNIOR: Do I still have some time for my two minutes?

TODD MCFARLAND: No. You already made the motion. Everyone will have to rescan in for the next item.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Just for me to be sure, there was a second? Seconded. Yes, thank you. The motion is debatable. There is a point of order regarding microphone number 7, Anthony Bosman, General Conference.

ANTHONY BOSMAN: Thank you. Maybe our parliamentarian can help us out. Our voting system is anonymous. So how does this work?

TODD MCFARLAND: Trust.

ANTHONY BOSMAN: Thank you.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: On Zoom 101, Karl Archer, North Jamaica Conference. And I hope you're speaking on the motion to reconsider.

KARL ARCHER: Yes, Mr. Chair. I am supporting the motion to reconsider, and we have had excess of this discussion. I don't know, Mr. Chair, you can guide me, if it's appropriate at this time to move the previous question on this motion. Please guide.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: You have a right to that. [Undecernable] The previous question has been moved. Is there a second? Seconded. Thank you. And with that we will prepare to vote. We have a point of order on microphone number 5, Ron Carlson, Kansas-Nebraska Conference, North America Division.

RON CARLSON: I'm not familiar with the procedure as I know Todd is. But according to what I just looked up, and maybe we don't abide by this, a motion to reconsider is not supposed to happen in the same meeting or the same day. I don't know if we abide by that but the general *Rules of Order* for a motion to reconsider are not allowed in the same meeting.

TODD MCFARLAND: Actually, Mr. Chairman, it's the exact opposite. It has to be on the same day. You are right, there are time limits, but it is just the opposite of that. It has to be on the same day.

RON CARLSON: Thank you, Todd.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you. Another point of order, and that's microphone number 2, Petronio Genebago, Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

PETRONIO GENEBAGO: Point of order. Because a while ago we saw the support of the majority in the motion to discuss. But when it was tabled, you know, the decision is—

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: That's not a point of order.

PETRONIO GENEBAGO: Mr. Chair, what I'm saying is, I hope that we can clarify when we vote “yes” or “no,” because—

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you. It's not a point of order. But your advice is taken.

PETRONIO GENEBAO: Thank you very much.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you.

TODD MCFARLAND: All Right, Mr. Chairman. We will try to advise on that better. We try to say it repeatedly, but, you know, we'll try to do that better. But we are opening now—this is the motion for the previous question on the motion to reconsider. So, this would be stopping debate on the motion to reconsider, and this is on the Statement on the Bible. If you're ever wondering what we talk about in parliamentary training sessions, this is it. So, Mr. Chairman, we'll just give it a second. It's available. Individuals have two minutes to vote. So, this is simply—sorry, Mr. Chairman, this is simply to cease debate on the motion to reconsider.

[Voting]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: All Right, 1,101 voted “yes,” 132 voted “no,” so the motion passes to cease debate. And we go back to the motion to reconsider. But before that there is a point of order. Just be sure that it's a point of order on microphone number 1, Oliveiros Pinto Ferreira Junior, Sao Paulo Valley Conference, SAD.

OLIVEIROS PINTO FERREIRA JUNIOR: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sorry for coming back. It's just that this last vote was not clear for my group here what we were actually voting for. If you could just explain but it's gone as well; so, I don't know. I'm sorry.

TODD MCFARLAND: Sure. This is why we put it on the ballot and on the screen and I said it at least twice. The prior vote was solely to cease debate upon the motion to reconsider. So, we have done that. We will know, though there's another point of order, once we've cleared that point of order up, we will then vote on the motion to reconsider. And remember this is the motion to reconsider the referral on the Statement on the Holy Bible. So that is the parliamentary procedure, the status of this. We are now considering and will vote next on a motion to reconsider the motion to refer on the Holy Bible. And

I understand that this can get confusing, and we will try to explain it as many times as we can. It can get confusing. I will grant you that.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: I appreciate your patience. Thank you. We would like to recognize the gentleman on microphone 2, Stefan Giuliani, Inter-European Division.

STEFAN GIULIANI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And sorry for being a bit late. I have a point of order on this motion to reconsider. I have read the Rules of Order and here it states on page 10 that the purpose of reconsideration is to permit correction of an erroneous action, especially when added information has become available or a changed situation has developed since the vote was taken. And I was wondering what this added information or changed situation might be that caused the chair to allow this motion.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: The chair received information that there was confusion on the vote we took at that particular time and therefore allowed for a motion to reconsider.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, we are ready to now open the motion to reconsider. Mr. Chairman, just to be clear, we are now voting on whether or not to reconsider the vote with regard to the referral—no. That's. Will you please take that down? That is not the motion. Take that down now please. Thank you. That may or may not come in the future if there's a vote on that. It is a motion to reconsider the referral. And if that passes, then we will revote the motion to refer. Is everyone clear on that? So, this is just whether or not to re-vote the motion to reconsider. And we keep getting points of order, Mr. Chairman, but I will leave it up to you whether to accept that or not.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: And here there is a point of order on microphone number 2. Michael Worker, Australian Union Conference SPD.

MICHAEL WORKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My point of order is around the source of the confusion. I think there's a lot of confusion in the delegate body as to what is actually occurring at the moment. We are reconsidering whether to refer back the Statement on the Holy Bible. And that was

questioned, and the clarification I would like to seek is whether you're asserting that people were confused whether the statement on the Holy Bible should be referred back for more editorial work or not. It seems to a number of us that the confusion has developed as a result of the successful vote to table the statement on Ellen White because the referral back of the statement on the Holy Bible has become a barrier to progressing that motion.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: I will not consider that as a point of order.

MICHAEL WORKER: My question, therefore, is the basis on which the confusion exists around the referral back on the statement on the Bible.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: The speaker rose to the floor on a point of order and the chair will respect that. Please.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, I see we have one more point of order.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: One more point of order. Microphone number 2, Reinhard Gallos, Northern Rhenish-Westphalian Conference, EUD.

REINHARD GALLOS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to clearly point out what was the point of confusion, and what is now the reason to reconsider so that this second move is valid? And I just want to point out are we all aware that this Session is streamed live on YouTube and can be reviewed at any time.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Yes, I will repeat again, the chair received information that there was no understanding with some on what exactly, when we took the motion to refer, the “yes” would be and the “no” would be. It's on that basis that the chair did accept a motion to reconsider.

REINHARD GALLOS: We could put this on many points in the last week. Are you aware of this?

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you. We have another point of order, number 6, Dan Serns, Central California Conference of SDA, North America Division.

DAN SERNS: So last night I asked my wife—my wife said, it's time to eat supper. And I said, shall we table that? And then she said, what kind of a question is that? And I said, I'd like to ask question on that motion. And she said do you want to eat Italian or Mexican—

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Again, that's not a point of order.

DAN SERNS: Here is my point, here's my point.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Okay.

DAN SERNS: It was very confusing in all the mumbo jumbo; and so, I think there is a basis for the—

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you.

TODD MCFARLAND: All Right, Mr. Chairman. We are now going to open the vote. Now, this is on the screen, and it is on your ballot. This is a motion to reconsider the referral of the Statement on the Holy Bible. And it will be opened up here momentarily. So, if you would like to reopen the debate and discussion on the motion to refer the Holy Bible, you will vote “yes” on this. If you do not want to revisit that item, then you will vote “no.” Mr. Chairman, it is open, and individuals can vote now, and there is two minutes. So just to be clear, do you want to rediscuss referral of the Resolution on the Holy Bible?

[Voting]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: The motion to reconsider carries with 815 votes “yes,” 62 percent point five, and 488 votes “no,” 37.5. Therefore, we will go back to the motion to refer the Statement on the Bible. And remember that is debatable. The motion to refer is debatable. We have someone at microphone number 7, Dan Houghton, General Conference.

DAN HOUGHTON: Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak positively to us continuing with the motion so I would have to vote against the referral. I believe that in this day and age, whenever we make statements about just about everything, if there's some major political event or there's something else going on, we make statements about it, this is a simple statement about one of the most precious

things any of us can have, and that is a statement of affirmation of Scripture. And I really believe that we should go ahead with that. So, therefore, I am against referring to this.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much. Microphone number 7, Clinton Wahlen, General Conference.

CLINTON WAHLEN: Thank you, Brother Chair. I'm so happy that we have voted to reconsider this. It's a very important resolution. It's been through many stages of development. Many eyes have seen it. And certainly, there could probably be some improvements made. But since this is our last day of the Session, I don't think we have any time, really, to re-edit it. I think I would suggest that we vote it and affirm our confidence in the Bible and its inspiration. And since there was a motion to table the Statement on the Spirit of Prophecy, until we reconsidered this Statement on the Bible, I move that we take off the table the statement affirming The Spirit of Prophecy.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: That's not in order. We are speaking to the motion to refer back the Statement on the Holy Bible.

CLINTON WAHLEN: Okay. When would it be in order? I'll be happy to make it at a later time.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: All Right. Thank you very much. Microphone number 1, Oliveiros Pinto Ferreira Junior, Sao Paulo Valley Conference, SAD.

OLIVEIROS PINTO FERREIRA JUNIOR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The reason I brought this back is because this item was referred back to the committee due to a secondary item. The document on the Bible which we're now looking at speaks of authority of the Bible as revelation and reinforces aspects of it that are under attack. And somehow, we got stuck on secondary terms, ultimately the term "literal day," which, by the way, is completely consistent with Fundamental Belief number 1. That's exactly the same terminology as we already find in our books. So that's why I called it back, and I would like to emphasize that if there is a motion, there is a history, and right now one of the main doctrines that are being under attack. And I do not mean in the evangelical world or the word of people that don't believe

in Christianity. I mean in the Adventist circles. People are asking themselves if the Bible is the ultimate guide and revelation and should be followed into the epistemology levels that Adventists have always carried it out. So, I think it's very important that we vote for this. And once again I reaffirm to vote for this motion. Thank you.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: All Right. Thank you. On microphone number 2, Johannes Bochmann, Berlin-Central German Conference, EUD.

JOHANNES BOCHMANN: Thank you again, Mr. Chair. As we have the motion to refer back on the floor here again, I would like to put on record that I am speaking in favor of this motion. I have heard in the discussion that we have had earlier in the previous discussion preceding the vote that had already been taken, many good reasons, I believe, to refer back for reconsidering certain wording, certain ideas that were in this statement. And, quite frankly, so far, I have not heard a single argument, at least not one that has convinced me, why this should not be the case, why the confusion is not anymore there. All I've heard was, this has been through many committees. And I agree and I respect the work of every committee. I work on many committees on other levels of the Church myself. However, if that were a valid argument, then we wouldn't have to come here as delegates to the General Conference Session because we could delegate all our authority to committees. It is our responsibility to take a vote and to discuss, and if we believe that things need to be referred back because there is reason for discussion here on the floor, then I believe we should do that.

And the second aspect that I heard about was the aspect of time. I believe that is also not a valid argument. I will not, just to clarify, move to postpone indefinitely these items that we have on the table. However, that would be an adequate possibility of handling items that we cannot conclude here at this Session. As I said, I will not be doing that. But I do support the motion to refer it back to the committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much. We have a point of order on microphone number 7, Kyle Allen, General Conference.

KYLE ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your leadership during this debate. Just a point of order question. Can you please clarify for the body what it will mean on this motion to say “no” and what it would mean to say “yes.” I think there's some confusion and maybe just further clarification would help everyone. Thank you so much.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: This is a motion to refer. If you vote “yes,” then the motion carries. The item will be referred back. If you vote “no,” we will continue to consider and carry debate on the Statement on the Holy Bible. On English Zoom 101, Clement Joseph Mawa, East-Central Africa Division.

CLEMENT JOSEPH MAWA: Mr. Chairman, thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to speak to this issue. I would urge that we should vote that we go on to the main motion, rather than spending a lot of time on this one, because we cannot spend all the time arguing the same thing. What I heard people arguing over is just some word here, some full stop there, some comma there. Even if how perfect the document is written, there would still be arguments. That is because we all understand things from different perspectives. I believe the General Conference bodies have done a wonderful job. I want to commend them, and I support others who say that this must carry the day. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you for making your point. On microphone number 7 we have a point of order, Kathryn Proffitt, General Conference.

KATHRYN PROFFITT: Thank you, Brother Chair. My point of order concerns, I think there is confusion that goes beyond what motion we're voting for. I think the confusion is if we vote to refer back to the committee, will this come back this Session? Because the consequences would mean it would not come back for three years. Can you kindly clarify that?

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: That's very true. If we vote to refer this back, the likelihood is that it will only be back here during the next Session. That is good information to know and to remind ourselves. Thank you. Microphone number 7, Daniel Giang, General Conference.

DANIEL GIANG: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have a similar question to raise. When we started reconsideration of the motion to reconsider, Pastor Stele gave the impression to me that there was a possibility for ADCOM meeting during the Session if we would vote to bring it back afterwards. Was I mistaken in understanding what Dr. Stele said?

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Dr. Stele?

ARTUR A STELE: I never exclude miracles. It would take a miracle for it to come back.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: All Right. Thank you. Mic number 1, Pedro Luiz da Silva Oliveira, North Bahia Conference, SAD.

PEDRO LUIZ DA SILVA OLIVEIRA: We cannot go back to the committee. This Session has the power of God that He gave to decide. And this report presented by the General Conference, made with study and prayer, guided by the Holy Spirit, no doubt, that God is guiding all His business. And this vote in favor of this resolution will be done today for the spiritual growth and the development of the kingdom of God on earth. Because our motto is "Get involved." If there is something that we need to be involved in, it's with the sacred Scripture, with the Bible. The only rule of faith for every Seventh-day Adventist Christian, I call the previous question that we stop debating now and go to vote in favor of this request.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: The motion to call the previous question is seconded and that is not debatable. So, we will vote. Remember that a "yes" will mean we cease debate. And "no" will mean we continue.

[Voting]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: The motion carries, and we have 1,166 votes saying “yes,” 91.3 percent, and 111 votes saying “no.” And by that we go back to voting on the motion to refer. On this motion, if you vote “yes,” then the document will be referred back. If you vote “no,” then we will discuss the main statement. The motion to refer fails with 427 “yes.” That's 31.9 percent, and 911 votes “no,” which is 68.1 percent. We go back to the main statement. On microphone number 3. Mark Finley, General Conference.

MARK FINLEY: I stand in support of the statement. And I want to just evaluate some of the arguments against the statement, in the light of Scripture. One of the arguments against the statement is that we don't have a statement on Jesus, maybe we should have a statement on Jesus. You know, I'm interested in John 5:39. It says, “You search the Scriptures and in them you think you have eternal life, but they are they that testify of Me.” What would we know about Jesus if we didn't have the Bible? So, Seventh-day Adventists have always believed that the Bible is the most magnificent revelation of Jesus. It reveals His charm, His love, His greatness, and His goodness. So, a statement on the Bible is absolutely fundamental for a knowledge of the living Christ.

Some have been concerned about the word “literal.” But when you look at the Ten Commandment law, Jesus said remember through Moses written with his own finger on tables of stone, it says, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work,” and then when it gives the reason for the Sabbath, it says for God created the world in six days. So, if we don't have a literal six-day creation with God resting on the Sabbath, it seems to me that erodes our arguments on the Sabbath. So, the biblical statement prepared by BRI, ADCOM, I think uplifts Jesus, gives you the fundamentals of Scripture, exalts the Sabbath for which Seventh-day Adventists stand. So, I stand in support of the statement. I hope we'll vote it through today.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much. On microphone number 1, we have Edonilvan Floriano Silva, West Amazon Conference, South America Division.

EDONILVAN FLORIANO SILVA: Mr. President, there has been a lot of discussion today. It's amazing to me that God's people have some difficulties to understand that this is crucial for us, the Bible. We already voted three times and this subject came back again. The subject came back, and the convention is still here. I propose that we vote on this proposal that the committee brought to us that this matter can be inserted into the *Church Manual*. Thank you.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much. Microphone number 7, Lyndetta Schwartz, General Conference.

LYNDETTA SCHWARTZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you also for navigating this difficult question. I want to stand in support of this resolution for the Holy Bible. We are living in unprecedented times that I never thought we would see, things so simple as, am I a he or a she? We stand on the unshakable Word of God. And there we read in the very first chapter of the first book, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and it was void. Then God said." The Bible tells us in that chapter that in seven literal, consecutive days the world was created. If we cannot agree that we can vote today on this item, we are standing on shaky ground. I hope and pray that today we can vote on this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you for making your point. Microphone number 1, Gabriel Mulambwa, North Zambia Union Conference SID.

GABRIEL MULAMBWA: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I spent a beautiful day today listening to these submissions on this motion. This is why I'd like to graciously call the question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: We have a motion to call the question and it is seconded.

[Voting]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: The motion carries with 1,234 votes "yes." That's 94.1 percent. And 77, 5.9 percent "no." We now go back to the original motion. The motion is to accept the statement as

presented. We will hear from microphone number 2, Jaanus-Janari Kogerman, Estonian Conference, TED.

JAAANUS-JANARI KOGERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to ask you to address the delegates at the Session as this discussion was quite heated not to clap after the next vote has been taken and the results are shown. Thank you.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much. The chair will encourage that advice. It's very helpful in an environment where we are having open, genuine discussions, in an attempt to find a pathway to agreement that we do not clap. I would encourage us to refrain from that. We have another point of order regarding microphone number 7, Hudson Kibuuka, General Conference.

HUDSON KIBUUKA: Mr. Chairman, if it pleases you, I would like to suggest that before we vote, we have a word of prayer. This has been very divisive, and I believe the Holy Spirit can help us to come up with the right direction for it, Mr. Chairman. It's not a point of order, but I just took advantage.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: It even stands beyond the point of order. Very valid. The chair takes the advice. Another point of order on microphone 105, Russian Zoom, Vasilii Stefaniv. West Siberian Mission, ESD.

VASILII STEFANIV: We're here discussing a very important issue. And we're looking at it from different perspectives. And my suggestion is that we have prayer service, some prayer time so that we open our hearts to God's leading.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you and the point has been made. When we take the vote on the statement, a "yes" would mean we accept the statement as it is, that it may carry as it has been presented. If we vote "no," then we do not accept the statement as it is. So, I think it's very appropriate that at this point we pause for a word of prayer, we seek Divine guidance. The debate we have engaged in is in an attempt to exercise what we believe in and, therefore, let's seek Divine wisdom even as we go

to take a vote on this statement. And I would like to request Elder Mark Finley (microphone 3) If you can lead us in this important prayer, if you don't mind, shall we stand.

[Prayer by Mark Finley.]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: All Right. Thank you very much, Elder Mark Finley, and with that prayer we will prepare to vote.

TODD MCFARLAND: Alright, Mr. Chairman, we are opening up the ballot. This is, of course, on the main motion to approve the Resolution on the Holy Bible.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: I would repeat again, your “yes” would mean that the Statement is accepted as presented, and “no” means we are not accepting the Statement as presented.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, it is available.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Alright, you can go ahead and vote, and please remember to submit your vote. Again, this is a sensitive matter. We plead with you not to clap upon receiving the results.

[Voting]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Our organist has blessed us with wonderful music all through the Session, and we praise God for your service and ministry.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: The results are 1,249 voting “yes,” 88.8 percent, and 157 votes “no,” which is 11.2 percent, and therefore the motion carries, and the motion is accepted as presented.

ELBERT KUHN: Mr. Chairman, as the motion carries, I move to take from the table the Statement of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen White.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: All Right. We have that motion to take off the table the statement on Ellen G. White. Is there a second? Alright, I see a second. And with that then it is not debatable, and we will proceed to vote on the motion to take it off the table. That means in the motion passes, then we will go back to the statement. If the motion fails, then it will remain tabled. So, when the time to vote comes, remember “yes” will mean we are removing the item from being tabled, making it available for

our continued discussion. And if you vote “no” it means that it will remain tabled. We want to bring that clarity because of the concerns that you have registered—some of you—and we appreciate that as well. The ballot is available for you to vote—vote and submit your vote.

[Voting]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: The motion carries with 1,117 votes say “yes,” 82 percent, and then 246 votes, which is 18 percent, say “no.” So, the motion carries, and the Statement is adopted. Thank you so much for your participation. We will go to an information item to be presented by Elder Artur Stele. I’m very sorry, that was a motion to have it removed from the table. I went ahead of myself. I’m very sorry for that. OK. I see points of order on microphone 1, Daniel Duda, Trans-European Division.

Daniel Duda: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You already said it. I just wanted to point out we cannot continue as is. But you already acknowledged that.

Edonilvan Floriano Silva, West Amazon Conference, SAD.

EDONILVAN FLORIANO SILVA: I propose that we vote this point right now.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: You can't make a motion on a point of order; so, the floor is open to debate the statement. My apologies for misleading you, but the floor is open to debate the statement. Microphone number 8, Daniel Martich Lorenzo, Dominican Union Conference, Inter-America Division.

DANIEL MARTICH LORENZO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I strongly support this motion because when I was starting my journey with Jesus, her writings helped me to better understand the Bible and to remember that consecration to God every morning should be my first job. Additionally, I think this statement counteracts the emphasis some brethren wanted to make upon her writings, and also reaffirms what we believe about The Spirit of Prophecy so many others can be guided to the Bible. So, since this is not going back to the committee, we already voted on the Statement of the Bible and many arguments have been presented against and in favor of this statement, I call the previous question to cease debate and vote on this statement on Ellen G. White.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Alright, I will take that as a motion to cease debate. Is there a second?

Thank you. Then we will go into voting on the motion to cease debate, and then we will vote on the main motion.

[Voting]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Alright, 1,224 votes, it is 90.7 percent say “yes,” and 125 votes, 9.3 percent, say “no.” So, the debate ceases on the main motion.

TODD MCFARLAND: Alright, Mr. Chairman, we are now moving to the main motion, and that ballot will be open momentarily.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: I would like to repeat that on the main motion now, which is a statement that was read to us—we all participated in it—that if we will vote “yes,” then the statement is accepted as was read. If on the other hand, you vote “no,” then the statement is not accepted.

[Voting]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Alright. With 1,189 votes which is 84.9 percent saying “yes,” and 212 votes, 15.1 percent say “no.” With these results, the statement is accepted. Thank you very much. It has taken us long, but we have taken our votes on that and we would like to go to the next item, which is an information item, and I would call upon Elder Elias De Souza.

ELIAS DE SOUZA: Thank you, Brother Chair. The last GC Session tasked the BRI to produce a volume on hermeneutics and the mission has already been accomplished as already indicated in the report of the president. But I want to invite my colleague, Frank Hasel, the Editor of the volume, to give some more information about this book to you.

FRANK HASEL: Good afternoon, good evening, good morning, good day wherever you are online. I have some exciting news to share with you. As was indicated at the last General Conference Session in San Antonio in 2015 a request from the floor was made to study the issue of biblical interpretation in more greater detail, and the Biblical Research Institute at the General Conference of

Seventh-day Adventists has been asked to do that and produce a book. This book, *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Adventist Approach*, is a direct response to that request from the floor. In this book we build on previous publications of the BRI, and it examines in greater depth current issues of biblical interpretation. It also addresses several questions that have not been adequately addressed in previous publications. The BRI has presented several details of the book to the BRICOM committee from the General Conference that comprises more than 40 scholars and administrators from all regions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, representing a wide range of theological disciplines and 12 respected Adventist scholars and theologians have contributed 14 chapters in this book. In this book we cover a wide variety of different subjects that are very essential and important for biblical interpretation, among them the role of Ellen White in our interpretation of Scripture. And in light of the recent discussion that we just had, I think you will enjoy this chapter and benefit from it.

We deal with presuppositions and how they influence our understanding of the Bible. We deal with the relationship between science and the Bible and how that impacts our interpretation, what in the Bible is culturally conditioned and what is permanent in Scripture? What do we need to take into consideration when we want to correctly interpret the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation? And what about a Christ-centered hermeneutics? And many, many other interesting and important issues. Now, this book has been used already as a textbook in several of our Adventist schools and universities around the world, and you can get a printed copy of that book if you go to the Adventist bookstore at the Hampton Inn hotel, just around the corner here, and if you are watching online, you can get the same book online on Amazon.com, either on an online demand printing version or a digital version in a Kindle form. This book also has been translated already into Spanish, Portuguese, and just yesterday some gave me this Russian translation of the book. And other translations will follow shortly.

Now, the BRI has also produced 14 interesting short videos with all the authors of the chapters of these books on crucial topics. And in these videos the authors have given additional illustrations and

an introduction to the subject. And the good news is that these videos are available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Chinese, Arabic, and more languages are to follow. Now, you can find all these videos for free on the BRI YouTube channel.

Did you know that the Biblical Research Institute has its own YouTube channel? You can see the QR Code that will take you there. Teachers, you can use those videos in the classroom. Pastors, you can use them with your church elders and interested church members or for your own continuous education.

And last, but not least, you can access the videos, and you can purchase the book as well as many other helpful resources on the BRI website. And don't forget to follow the Biblical Research Institute on social media (Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter) to be up to date on theological things. Thank you very much.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much. All Right, leaders, we thank you for assisting us with those items. Now we will go to the *Constitution and Bylaws* items. You remember that there were items that were referred to the Standing Committee of the *Constitution and Bylaws* and that that committee met and invited those who had some concerns to come before the committee to make their presentations, and we are glad that they did, and we took time to listen to them. And after listening to them, the committee continued to consider the items that were referred back. And now we are coming back to you.

We are carrying discussion rather in the evening of the business sessions now that we are coming close to the end. And we may not have the opportunity to have the *Constitution and Bylaws* Committee again meet within the hours of our business session because you will understand that in certain parts of the world, people will begin going into the hours that are Sabbath hours, and therefore Friday will be set apart for some reports and that has been announced earlier.

And therefore, these items are being taken in the context of that reality that we may not have an opportunity during this same Session, again, for the Standing Committee to meet again. So, please take that into consideration as these items are being presented. Pastor Hensley.

HENSLEY M MOOROOVEN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Indeed, yesterday a few delegates came, and we sincerely value their insightful contribution, and I can see some of them here. There were different sets of skills that were represented. So, I want you to know, I want these delegates who came and those who sent us email that you had a voice in drafting some parts of the governing document of your Church. I believe that this is important for you to know that you were heard, you were listened to, and your input was sincerely studied. And what I'm going to share with you now is the product of this wide consultation.

After the meeting we sent you the revised document. It was on the website. It was on the app. You should have received a document similar to the one which is on the main screens now. And we have understood that more than 1,800 of you have accessed this e-mail. So, Mr. Chair, it means that the house is aware of what we are doing, and that's important—your duty, your responsibility of being informed. If you are ready, I am also ready. Let's quickly go to the first amendment that we are bringing to you, page 3.

From this house, we understood that we need to revisit two items on the section which is under b. First of all, there was a question about the definition of front-line. Do you recall that comment? We studied it. There was a question about full-time denominational employee, and we studied it as well.

After the study, we are ready to share with you what the final document will look like and, of course, bring it to your approval. If it pleases you, let me just quickly read lines 4 and 5. This will, therefore, read; so, we can start from line 3 so that you get the context, "One additional church pastor or other denominational employee with direct mission contact, such as Bible worker, health care professional, literature evangelist, teacher, etc." This is the first one. I will move the two together. And

the second one which on the main screen is section 2, the question from the delegate was this: How can we give ADCOM the delegated authority to approve the minutes of an Executive Committee? I promise you, we listened. And what we are bringing to you now is the revised version whereby the Executive Committee itself will approve its minutes.

So, thank you, Mr. Chair. If this is clear to the house, I am ready to move what is on your screen as one single motion. It's from the same part. If it is clear, I therefore move this amendment.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: The motion has been moved and seconded. Thank you. All Right. If there are any observations, any comments on what has been presented on screen, please scan your badge and come to the microphone. Alright, on microphone number 2 we have Johannes Bochmann, Berlin-Central German Conference EUD, please.

JOHANNES BOCHMANN: Yes. Thank you once again, Mr. Chair, and I would also like to take the opportunity of thanking you for the opportunity to present our concerns and our items at the *Constitution and Bylaws* Committee yesterday. I believe that all the comments were adequately dealt with, and I believe that it is a good solution that has been found. I believe we have discussed everything not only in the committee but also before on the floor and therefore I call the previous question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: The previous question has been called and that is to cease debate on the item, and it was seconded. We will take a vote on that since it is not debatable. In a short while the ballot will be open on the motion to call the previous question that is to cease debate. Alright, you have it. Please vote and remember to submit your vote.

[Voting]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Alright, 1,155 votes saying "yes," that is 98.5 percent, and 17 votes saying "no," which is 1.5 percent. The motion carries. Thank you. Now, let's vote on the main motion.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, the main motion will be open momentarily. Mr. Chairman, the main motion is open and will be open for two minutes.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Please go ahead and vote on the main motion to amend the General Conference *Constitution and Bylaws*, Constitution, Article VIII, General Conference Executive Committee as found in the Session Agenda on the pages that were projected before us. After you vote, please submit your vote.

[Voting.]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Alright, 1,166 votes, which is 98.6 percent say “yes,” and 16 votes, which is 1.4 percent say “no.” So, the motion carries. Thank you. I understand then that we can go to the next item.

HENSLEY M MOOROVEN: Yes, indeed, we can go to the next, and it will be the last item that we are bringing to the House. I would like to thank my brother from EUD. I think his name is Brother Johannes. I would like to thank him for his very pertinent comment because indeed, it was with an open mind that the committee listened to every delegate. And you know what, Mr. Chair, our mind, it is like a parachute. It works best when it is open. And that is why we listen, we accept, and we study what we hear from others. What was the issue here, Mr. Chair? The issue was the limitation of one year. Will you recall that?

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Just a moment. I have a point of order on microphone number 8, Juan Garcia Gil, Sonora Mexican Conference, Inter-America Division.

JUAN GARCIA GIL: We have been called by our Church to be able to help take the leadership in its forward function for the next five years.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: This is not a point of order.

JUAN GARCIA GIL: I have a concern and I would like to express myself.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: All Right. Not on the point of order. You can raise it at another time when it is appropriate to make your concern. You may proceed, Elder Mooroven.

HENSLEY M MOOROVEN: Thank you kindly. The issue that was at stake here is we initially deleted the two-year period and we added one year. But after listening to the concerns, we are reverting to what it was initially. So, that's taken care of. We are not changing the period. It is still two years. It should not exceed two years. That is why you don't see anything that is highlighted. It's how it was initially. Now, Mr. Chairman, the underlined section could potentially cause some confusion. Therefore, the committee, after listening, thinks that by adding the last few words it would clarify the whole matter. Allow me to read what this is all about, and I will read these four sentences for you.

“In the event that the GC Executive Committee exercises its authority to postpone a Session, it shall also have the authority to set the subsequent regular Session at such time and place as it shall see fit, not to exceed five calendar years from the date the postponed Session was convened.”

In other words, today is the postponed 2020 GC Session. And it convenes in 2022. This provision says that the next Session from the convened date, that is 2022, shall not exceed five calendar years. The inclusion of the word “was convened” we believe clarifies the matter.

If it is clear to the house, I move that we accept this amendment. It has been moved, Pastor Chair.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you. It has been moved and seconded. The floor is open on the proposal. And I already see on microphone number 1 Gabriel Mulambwa, Northern Zambia Union Conference, SID.

GABRIEL MULAMBWA: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. The discussion on this motion was already made clear yesterday and the submissions have been well noted, and this is why I would like to call question on the motion.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: The question has been called that the debate ceases, and it is seconded. There is a point of order on microphone number 5, Jonathan Burnett, Illinois Conference, North America Division.

JONATHAN BURNETT: Thank you, Chair. Can you just clarify for us one more time what is meant by the Session that was postponed? Are we currently in the Session that was postponed or does that refer to the one that should have happened in 2020?

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: All Right. It's not a point of order, which you rose to, but maybe a little later I'll have Elder Hensley respond on that.

TODD MCFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, the motion to call the previous question on debate is open and can be voted on. You have two minutes.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Alright, please go ahead and vote on the previous question. "Yes" will mean we cease debating, and "no" will mean we open up the debate and continue with the debate on the motion.

[Voting]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Alright, we have the results with 1,066 votes saying "yes," that's 95.3 percent, and 53 votes saying "no," which is 4.7 percent. The motion carries and the debate ceases.

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: We will go on to the main motion and express ourselves through a vote. The motion, again, is to amend the General Conference *Constitution and Bylaws*, Constitution, Article V, General Conference Session, Section 1, as found in the Session Agenda, and again as displayed before us on this screen.

[Voting]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Alright, the results are before us with 1,504 votes, which is 97.1 percent saying "yes," and 32 votes, which are 2.9 percent saying "no," therefore the motion carries. With that

we have finished the items from the *Constitution and Bylaws Committee*, and before we come to have the closing prayer for this afternoon's session, we have an announcement for you.

ELBERT KUHN: [Announcement about COVID testing.]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much for that. Our time is a little passed by a few minutes and we would like to adjourn but before we do that, let me invite our Sister Raquel Arias who is the Shepherdess Director for NSD, and is with us. If you could come to the microphone and please lead us into the closing prayer. And to all of you we want to say thank you very much for giving cooperation and for your understanding as well. And we wish you a good time as you take your dinner.

RAQUEL ARRAIS: [Prayer]

GEOFFREY G MBWANA: Thank you very much Sister Raquel. We will meet again here at 7:00 pm for worship.

[End of afternoon session.]