

SEVENTH BUSINESS MEETING

Sixtieth General Conference session, July 6, 2015, 9:30 a.m.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: We welcome you to the business session this morning, and we'd encourage all of you to find your seats so that we can begin on time. Please conclude your conversations, adjourn your subcommittees, and find a place so you can sit comfortably, because we have much to talk about.

Actually, today is a very historic day. If you have received a copy of today's *Adventist Review* that has come, there is an article on page 36 that announces that this day, today, 600 years ago John Huss was burned at the stake. John Huss was one of the forerunners of the Reformation. He started the process that resulted in the succession of other Protestant Reformers returning to the Scriptures. And that is our heritage as well.

John Huss is special to me because my father's family comes from the Czech Republic. And I remember as a child growing up that John Huss was revered very greatly. And we appreciate that heritage. It is kind of part of our family's DNA. And so we're happy to celebrate.

We have a man here from the Czech Republic, Dr. Daniel Duda from the Trans-European Division. He is standing at mike 6. Would you say a statement, Daniel?

DANIEL DUDA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to give you a quote from the interpretation of faith which John Huss wrote in 1412, that is three years before his death, something that speaks to us even today and we can all identify with.

"Therefore, faithful Christians, seek the truth, hear the truth, learn the truth, love the truth, speak the truth, hold on to the truth, defend the truth until death, for the truth shall deliver you from sin and the devil." And listen to this.

"From death of your soul and finally from eternal death, which is eternal separation from God's grace." No wonder that John Huss was such a hero for Ellen White, and she devoted a whole chapter in

The Great Controversy to him. So I wanted this august body to remember that we are followers of this tradition and this great man. Thank you.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you. Thank you. Let's remember this special day, and let's value our Protestant heritage, and let's commit ourselves to remain faithful to the Scriptures that these Reformers gave their lives to protect.

I'm going to invite Alfredo Marenko to come to the podium to offer a prayer for us now as we begin. Let us stand together.

[Prayer by Alfredo Marenko.]

[Song.]

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: We have some items that we need to care for before we get into our agenda. One of these is the request that came from this body to use a two-thirds majority vote for the discussions and voting on the fundamental beliefs. The Steering Committee has deliberated on this subject. There are pros and cons for that alternative. And Elder Wilson is going to share with us the background and the redemption of the Steering Committee.

Elder Wilson.

TED N. C. WILSON: Good morning, brothers and sisters. What a privilege it is to be together in this Alamodome for a period of review and discussion, especially as we approach the review of the fundamental beliefs. And let me assure that you we are not changing our fundamental beliefs. We are simply trying to enhance it, to make it more readable, and to certainly explain things in a little better way.

I'll have some comments on the fundamental beliefs in just a few moments at the appropriate time. But I want to thank you for being here. I want to thank you for what I hope will be a sweet spirit as we go into this discussion.

I am reminded of the reading for today. There were two chapters in *Revived by His Word* that were to be read. And one of the chapters that is most helpful and important and pertinent to Seventh-day Adventists is that beautiful fourteenth chapter of Revelation. And in that twelfth verse, I would ask that

this verse be the theme for our morning: “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

Now, in this beautiful text, patience also denotes endurance and perseverance. But I also would like to use the word “patience” in relation to what we will need as we go into discussion. Patience.

I want to appeal to you this morning. I know that there are certain feelings that throb in your heart. I know that there are certain assumptions that some make about certain things that may have been brought up in the *Church Manual* revisions. I want to appeal to you today that we make a course correction in how we relate to each other and to the items being brought before us.

You’ll recall that on Thursday morning we made a very special appeal, that in whatever way we relate to people, we will do so with a sweet, Christlike approach and respect for each other. And I want to thank those who have shown that spirit.

I also would appeal to you that as we go into this session and sessions beyond, we be very careful and prudent and very mindful of the need to use parliamentary procedure in an appropriate and minimum way, not denying the fact that parliamentary procedure is part of our operation.

But if you read in the little booklet *Rules of Order*, you will find in there an appeal from those who put *Rules of Order* together, where, if we try to stick to the letter of the law on everything, it will destroy the spirit.

I appeal to all of you, everyone: Let us have a sweet spirit. Let us not try in numerous ways to bring up points of order when, in reality, the points of order include opinions that should be in the discussion, not in points of order.

A point of order is a very specific thing, and it should not include any opinion. It should just point out a lack in process or whatever that item is.

I would ask that that would be used to the minimum and not to be used as some form of trying to control the agenda. I don’t deny the fact that there are good-hearted people who may have a real point of order, and that certainly is acceptable. Also in our discussion, if you have a strong burden, that’s fine. But let us work in the spirit of Jesus today, and let us find our way through in what we are doing.

I also would like to comment on the use of the voting process. And our chair will share a little more about that, I'm sure, as we move into the discussion. But I would hope—it is my fervent personal hope, and I hope the hope of most of you—that we can use the voting cards rather than the secret ballot for items that we can clearly see a voting card would be acceptable.

For those items that are very difficult and have much discussion, we absolutely can use the secret paper ballots. But I appeal to you: For most of our voting, especially in this section, let us use, in the spirit of love and of collegiality, the voting card. It's my appeal. This is not any kind of ruling. But I appeal to you, as we go into this session and beyond, and especially, my dear brothers and sisters, on Wednesday: Let us go into these discussions with the sweetest spirit possible.

I want to make a comment about what our chair has asked. The Steering Committee received the information. We also listened to one this morning who had a burden about putting into the *Rules of Order* a limiting provision that would allow for a two-thirds majority to change any fundamental belief.

After listening to a brother who presented that, the Steering Committee reflected, discussed, and has voted that, first of all, we do not believe that the fundamental beliefs should be subject to a two-thirds majority or super majority vote.

In 1980 when the fundamental beliefs, the 27 fundamental beliefs, were voted, it was done by a simple majority. In 2005, when an additional fundamental belief was voted, it was done by simple majority. Almost everything we do in the church in terms of actual agenda items are done by simple majority. Our counsel is that we do not move away from that normal process.

Now, when it comes to the fundamental beliefs, let me assure you. And Pastor Stele will be telling you more about it in just a few moments. He will be explaining the careful protocols, the careful procedure that has been voted and followed in terms of treating any change to the fundamental beliefs.

This is not some kind of trick approach. It involves the divisions, it involves the Annual Council, it involves consultation, and it involves time. It is not our intention that fundamental beliefs should be changed or adjusted with a very close vote. The whole process is to ensure a consensus opinion.

And so, because of all of that, Brother Chair and each of you, we would strongly recommend that we do not insert, certainly not in the *Rules of Order* or in any constitutional provision, a two-thirds rule for fundamental beliefs changing or adjustment.

Brother Chair, that is what we are recommending to this body.

And again, my brothers and sisters, with all sincerity I appeal to you to have a sweet spirit, to calm our hearts, ask for God's guidance, so that we do not get caught up in parliamentary process and in trying somehow to block the process of our work.

If you have a conscientious conviction and decision, absolutely you need to express it, and you have that right.

My fervent prayer, Brother Chair and all of us, is that this particular session and the sessions that follow will follow in the beautiful twelfth verse, those who have patience, those who have the patience of the saints, those who have the testimony of Jesus.

Thank you for your kind attention, and thank you for your loving and caring cooperation.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you, Elder Wilson.

[Applause.]

Just a few other items that I'd like to bring to your attention that have been addressed. We heard yesterday, and before, that there were some issues in the area of microphone 3. We have someone monitoring that today. And if there seems to be further problems, please come down to the front here where the technicians and the Secretariat are located and notify them so that something can be checked further. And we hope that that condition will be taken care of.

And generally, when you go to a microphone or go to a person who is registering your permission to speak, treat them kindly. Remember, all of our actions here at this session need to reflect the character of Jesus Christ, which includes kindness and courtesy to those who are involved.

I would like to mention that the discussion today on the fundamental beliefs are very important, but we have two days to discuss these. However, this day, Monday, is the first day, and we will need to try to get through all of them. Because if there are comments or suggestions that need to go back to the

writing committee, they need time to work on those and then bring their decisions back for the session tomorrow on Tuesday.

So let's try to gauge our time. Let's refrain from standing just to speak, to hear ourselves speak. Let's try to limit our debate so that we can move through quickly on these items.

Regarding the voting devices, a number of you have turned them in. We ask that you not try to turn those in during the time of our business meeting. You can turn them in immediately after the business meeting ends at noontime or later, after the session ends in the late afternoon.

And so, if you would, abide by those suggestions. But please do turn in those electronic voting devices so that you will not be on a list of those who have to be charged some large fee because they were not returned.

I'd like to introduce those who are serving with me on the platform this morning. We have our parliamentarian, Todd McFarland. To my left is Agustin Galicia, one of the associate secretaries of the General Conference. And we have Tami Boward, who is the recording secretary here. I appreciate their help, and we will work together to try to make this an efficient experience.

OK. We have a person at microphone 5, Henry Moncur.

HENRY MONCUR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a quick observation. You can correct me if I may be wrong.

I know there are a number of individuals here who are career delegates, and so they are versed when it comes to the rules of order. I heard it mentioned earlier by Elder Wilson in terms of not misusing the terms of order and other parliamentary procedures. But at the same time, there are individuals here who are not career delegates, and so they are not as well versed on the rules of order. And what transpired was the rules of order just simply placed in your delegate bag, and you are left alone to try to maneuver through all of those rules of order. I don't know if there's a possibility, just before we enter the session, if they may be able to be given a brief summary in terms of how to utilize the rules of order so that the process is not abused. But I think the assumption is being made that everybody knows the rules of order and understand it. And I think that that is what is creating some of the challenges. So I don't know if we

can have the opportunity, just a slight one- or two-minute summary, to help those who may not be career delegates to really understand the whole use of the rules of order.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Thank you. If you have your booklet on the rules of order, the *General Conference Rules of Order*, I've asked our parliamentarian to quickly go through those. And perhaps, if you turn to page 12, there is a chart there, at least in the English section, and in all the other languages as well. That's a good summary. And maybe if we all look at that page, some comments can be made about the various motions and how this all works, along with the definition of a point of order.

TODD MC FARLAND: Sure. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It's important to understand the fundamental principle of rules of order. It is to respect the rights of both the majority and the minority, to respect the will of the majority and protect the rights of the minority.

That, really, is what all of these rules are designed to do. And that, of course, can be a balancing act, because sometimes protecting the rights of a minority may impede the will of the majority. But that is the bounds that the rules try to balance.

You'll see in your motions table, if you look there in the middle, there's something called a main motion, and that has a "1." And that just simply means the rank. What is a main motion? That's when we're doing something substantively. When the gentlemen are up here and they read a change to the *Church Manual* and they say, "I move it," and there's a second, that's a main motion.

After a main motion, you have several options. I'm not going to go through all 10 of these. But the one that's the most common is an amendment, and that is to change something. One thing you have to understand about amendments (and this came up yesterday) is that our constitution—and the constitution overrides the rules of order—has a provision that says any new business is referred to the Steering Committee.

So if someone attempts to amend something that is not being changed, is not on the agenda, then that has to be referred to the Steering Committee, and it is not appropriate for this body, per the

constitution that was voted. And that particular amendment, I believe, was implemented in Atlanta. And, of course, an amendment requires a second, and it requires a majority.

The other motion here that I would like to talk about just real briefly—and it is, in fact, my favorite one—is the one to limit and extend debate. And that is—well, I’m sorry. It’s part of that. It’s actually down below there, and it’s related. And that is a motion to call the previous question.

What does that mean? That means that if you vote that, then that ceases debate. And that is important for you to understand. That requires a two-thirds vote. But if you hear that phrase, “Mr. Chairman, I vote to call the previous question,” we’ll try to remind the chairs to tell you what that means. That means that we cease debate immediately on that item and we go immediately to a vote.

Now, why did I say that’s my favorite one? As a parliamentarian, I’m supposed to stay neutral, and I do. But as is any person who is sitting up here, the one thing I’m hoping for is a quick meeting. Now, having said that, I recognize that it’s your meeting.

So that is important, and it’s a very powerful motion, but it can be one to help limit debate.

And the other one that is on here is what is called a question of privilege, or what we refer to as a point of order.

What is a point of order?

One of the best examples of a point of order is what happened yesterday when Israel Leito stood up and said, “We’re not hearing the Spanish translation.” Points of order interrupt the business, and so they go to the highest priority, but they should deal with issues that affect the rights of the body or the ability of the body to conduct its business. And no Spanish translation, or that of any other language, is a perfect example of that.

And why is that? Because if there’s no Spanish translation, then the Spanish-only speakers are entirely disenfranchised. And so we need to stop the business immediately and get that fixed before we go on.

Other points of order, of course, are a violation of the rules. If you believe that the chair has ruled on something, then that can be a point of order. Another one that has come up that is an appropriate point

of order is, of course, the decorum. Applauding and expressing emotion for speakers and so forth is inappropriate in this meeting or any meeting. It's not how we conduct business. And the chairs try to do their best to remind the body of that. But that is an appropriate point of order: if you believe the body is not showing proper decorum.

So I think, just briefly, that covers many of the major issues.

One of the big rules that we have here is that we don't accept nominations for names from the floor. They have to come from the Nominating Committee. And we also have a very special process about how things can be referred back. And the chair can, at his or her discretion, send a name back. If they choose not to do that, then it goes to a vote.

And that's one of the big rules that we have here.

So, Mr. Chairman, hopefully that explains some of the rules of order to people. You know, I'd be more than happy at an appropriate time afterward, if a person has a question about something—and a lot of you have felt free to talk to me, and I am more than happy to answer any of your questions when we're not in session.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you. I see a person at microphone 2, Pastor Lee-Roy Chacon.

LEE-ROY CHACON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In order to move matters quickly and expedite matters today, I move that we limit conversation to two minutes per individual.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Brother Chacon, would you be willing to make it three minutes if there is translation that is required?

LEE-ROY CHACON: That's fine.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Two minutes for regular persons speaking; three minutes if they have to have a translator.

LEE-ROY CHACON: That's fine, sir.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Is there a second to that motion? Please indicate.

Yes. I see a second to that.

And this is a motion that is debatable, so if anyone wants to comment on it, we can.

Now, I see that at microphone 6 we have someone who is claiming a point of order. Let's check and see if it truly is a point of order.

SAMUEL DAVIS: Yes, Brother Chair. On Friday there was a recommendation that a two-thirds majority should be taken on the changes to the fundamentals. It was referred to the Steering Committee. The president has said that the Steering Committee has voted, but they can only make a recommendation to this body. This body now needs to vote that we are to go with a simple majority.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. That is not a point of order, so I'm not going to act on that. We have a motion on the floor about limiting the time of debate for each individual, and we will speak to that issue.

Microphone 3, Carlos Moreta. Are you speaking to this motion on the floor?

CARLOS MORETA: No. It's on another point.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. We'll hold that, then. Are we ready to vote on this motion to limit an individual's time of speaking to two minutes and, if they require translation, three minutes? Are you ready to vote?

All in favor, please raise your cards.

OK. Thank you.

Any opposed, the same card.

OK. It is carried. That motion has been carried.

Now let me go back to Brother Carlos Moreta at microphone 3. And you have two minutes.

CARLOS MORETA [translated]: Good morning, Mr. President and chairman. At the start of the session this morning, the president asked us to pray for the Holy Spirit to be with us. I would appeal to the chairman that the decisions that are made here by the body are respected and in a firm way. For example, yesterday we voted to use the paper cards, voting cards. So we voted not to use the electronic devices. And the majority of the delegates voted in favor of that. And so there was much ambivalence and debate regarding that with the 2,000 or so delegates that are here. And so that's where we're wanting to follow

their thought or their wishes, their desires. We don't have enough time to complete the work that's before us. I would request that we respect the majority vote of the body.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: One minute.

CARLOS MORETA [translated]: That's the process that we follow from throughout our denominational structure from the local church to the GC. Thank you so much.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you. Let's go back. There was a brother here who felt we ought to actually vote as a body about the two-thirds majority matter. Did you want to make that into a motion, since you thought we should vote on it?

SAMUEL DAVIS: I move, Brother Chair, that this body votes on that recommendation.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. The motion—and I'll have to interpret your motion a little bit here so we know how to vote. The recommendation that comes from the Steering Committee is that we do not use two-thirds majority for voting on the fundamental beliefs here. So if you would vote in favor of that, you don't want to see the two-thirds majority. If you vote against that, then you would still like to see the two-thirds majority.

We were just discussing what the motion actually was. The speaker did not make it entirely clear.

Essentially, we need to vote yes or no on the use of the two-thirds majority. And I tied it into the Steering Committee.

OK. After consultation, we have come to the conclusion that the motion is essentially to accept the recommendation that was brought to this body, which means that if you vote in favor of the motion, we will not use the two-thirds majority. If you vote no, then you're still open, and perhaps you're one who would like to use the two-thirds majority.

Do you understand how to vote?

I see a person at microphone 2, point of order, Julie Keymer.

JULIE KEYMER: Good morning, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday I requested that these points—these motions—be put in writing for all of us, including the English-speaking people. So if we could continue to do that from now through the rest of the session, that would be very helpful. Thank you.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Thank you.

We're going to try to get that motion on the screen.

And we have another person here at microphone 1, Brother Lante Thompson.

LANTE THOMPSON: Good morning, Mr. Chairman.

I think we need some clarity from this committee. Besides this main motion, there could be some other motions that will be raised. Do we go by simple majority on those motions as well? And we hope the Steering Committee will give some clarity on that. Thank you.

TED N. C. WILSON: Brother Chair, if I can comment. We don't want anyone to be confused here. The way the church conducts business in almost every respect except for the changing of constitutions—you have a constitution wherever you are. It may say in there it needs to be by two-thirds. The way we conduct business at Annual Council, at the General Conference session, in normal committee meetings, whether they be at local level, union, division, General Conference, is by using a simple majority, which means you have to have one vote more than the exact middle of however many people you have at the meeting.

So there is no need to clarify anything further by the Steering Committee. And the individual who brought up the aspect that we voted, we only voted to recommend or to share with you what it is.

So the motion that is now in place is to accept—as we understand it, to accept the recommendation from the Steering Committee that we do not change the simple-majority approach but that we continue with that and we do not accept the two-thirds majority that was being suggested the other day. That is our recommendation. But in almost every other case except for constitutional changes, we are recommending, and we use throughout the church, a simple majority. We do that not just with a political or a procedural approach, but we do most voting with a direct asking for God's guidance through prayer.

Thank you, Brother Chair.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: I see a point of order at microphone 6, Brother Balapi.

BROTHER BALAPI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I sense now and even previously that after a motion has been made, the chair takes a little bit of time hesitating to call for a second. That creates room for

some kind of discussion before the motion is really moved. I request, Mr. Chair, that you call for a second on this motion, so that if there is a need for discussion, we do so; otherwise, we vote on it. Thank you.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: I do call for a second on this one, I think. Yes. My colleagues say that we did call for a second on this motion.

OK. We have one more at microphone 2, Larry Boggess.

LARRY BOGGESS: Mr. Chairman, good morning. I sit in the North American Division section, and I can hardly read that. For those in the back, they probably can't read it, so I would encourage us to use a bigger font.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. I'll pass the word along to my colleagues here.

OK. Microphone 4, Eric Hensel, Inter-European Division. It's a point of order.

ERIC HENSEL: I want to support the wish that we vote on the motion that was done on Thursday, if we want to go with the two-thirds majority when we are talking about changes—

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: This is not a point of order. You're supporting an action, which is expressing your opinion.

ERIC HENSEL: The thing is, we heard the recommendation by Elder Wilson that this could not be done as a motion, so we cannot vote on the recommendation; we can just vote on the motion if we want to do a two-thirds majority or not.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: You're voting on that now. The motion is that if you want to follow the recommendation, which would be to use a simple majority, then you will vote yes on this motion.

If you still want to use a two-thirds majority, you would vote no, in which case, then, we'd have to have another motion to change the rules. And that motion would require also a two-thirds majority in order to pass, because we are changing the rules of order.

So it gets a little bit complicated here in parliamentary procedure, but we want to follow that. And I'll ask our parliamentarian to comment, should we get to that point.

Right now we have this simple motion that says to accept the recommendation, and the recommendation is not to use a two-thirds majority. It's to use a simple majority.

OK. I see people coming to the mikes. I hope it's really important what you have to say, because we're consuming time here on this item. But let's go to microphone 3, Julio Mendez.

JULIO MENDEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, we had been hearing a lot of the phrase "point of order." Is there a possibility that we will not be using so much the phrase "point of order" when it is not really a point of order?

I would like to suggest, Mr. Chairman and the parliamentarian, just brief us, the body, if we are in the main motion, if we are in the subsidiary motion, or if we are in the privileged motion, or if we are in the incidental motion, and take it by precedence.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I would like to call for the motion—the question for the motion, as reflected on the board.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. You're moving the previous question.

Is there a second to that? OK.

Those in favor?

Opposed?

It is carried.

So that means that we now cease our discussion, and it's not debatable. However, we do need a two-thirds majority in order for this kind of a motion to pass.

I'm sorry? OK. I don't hear unless you go to the microphone.

OK. This is whether we stop debate or not. OK.

Are you ready to vote?

All in favor, please raise your voting cards.

OK.

Any opposed, raise your voting card.

It is carried.

So debate has ceased, we will clear the board, and we will go back to the main motion.

The motion that was written on the screen, it is correct except for what has been added: “Constitution and Bylaws.” By definition, in parliamentary procedure, constitution and bylaws do require a two-thirds majority vote.

We are now voting on this main motion which is before us that we accept the Steering Committee’s recommendation to vote using a simple majority for every item that will be voted during this session except for constitution and bylaws items.

Are you ready to vote?

All in favor, please raise your voting cards.

OK. Thank you.

Any opposed, raise your voting cards. OK.

It has been carried.

So now we have an official decision regarding the method of voting.

I would now like to come to the business of the day, and that is the beginning of the discussion on our fundamental beliefs. And the person who will lead us will be Dr. Artur Stele, who is the chairman and the director of our Biblical Research Institute and worked very hard on the process of forming these fundamental beliefs.

Now, along with him with a couple of his Writing Committee members, Bill Knott and Ángel Rodríguez. They’re going to be there to take notes in case some of you have suggestions that you’d like the Writing Committee to consider. They will take those notes, and this afternoon they will get together and review your suggestions to see if there seems to be broad merit in what you have suggested. And so that is why those two gentlemen are there.

Artur Stele is here. And, Elder Wilson, please introduce this for us.

TED N. C. WILSON: Thank you, Brother Chair. And may I just pause to thank all of you for the good decorum and the way that we’re proceeding with this item and the previous item. I’m very grateful for the good spirit.

How did this begin in terms of looking at the fundamental beliefs?

Very briefly, because Pastor Stele will give you more information. At the General Conference session in Atlanta in 2010, a motion and a vote was taken that allowed for the General Conference to look carefully at especially fundamental belief 6. This has to do with Creation and the wording of it so that it fully and carefully states our full position according to our understanding from the Bible.

In addition—and I might say that that request to the General Conference to be followed up by the General Conference after the session was an enormously huge vote. I don't know the percentage precisely, but I would say at least 95 percent voted to refer to the General Conference the opportunity of looking at fundamental 6.

Also, we began to think perhaps there were some adjustments that could be made to enhance and to clarify the fundamentals.

A small Writing Committee was put together, chaired by Dr. Stele, composed of Dr. Ángel Rodríguez, Dr. Bill Knott, and Dr. Gerhard Pfandl. These individuals helped to put together some suggestions. The process will be explained to you by Pastor Stele, a very careful process during which things have gone through many different filters, many different committees, and divisions that have had strong input.

The system is now before us; there will be opportunity today to listen to recommendations regarding certain aspects of what is being recommended. We have set aside this morning and tomorrow morning. We have with us the Nominating Committee. They are meeting with us. This is of such importance that all of those individuals on the Nominating Committee, many of them union presidents and other leaders, laypeople, they are with us for this discussion and tomorrow morning as well. I would hope, Brother Chairman, that, as I have indicated, we can move carefully but in a very progressive way toward the completion of this task.

Even today there will be items that Pastor Stele will introduce to you that I would hope will pass without great difficulty at all, a little change, an addition of a biblical text, maybe just a little nuance that has been changed. These, I hope, we can vote through the use of the voting card. And if in the future there are some very difficult challenges, we certainly can use the paper voting ballot.

I would also ask, Brother Chair, that before any vote is taken the motion is restated, and if it is shown on the screen, even better. We want everyone to know what exactly is being recommended.

The process that will be followed is that, after listening today to certain comments, the Writing Committee will be able to look at this document and bring in further refinements tomorrow for certain ones that have not passed today.

So, Brother Chair, with this introduction and with, again, an appeal for a sweet, collegial spirit, we now ask Dr. Stele to explain further the process.

ARTUR STELE: Good morning. I hope we will have a very productive morning today, because we are dealing with something that is really of essence. We treasure our message, and we will talk about it.

As it was stated, a Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee was formed, and terms of reference were given. And we had two terms of reference: the first one, to review the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to determine if the language is clear and distinct, and recommend wording refinements if needed; and second—and this is of importance—to integrate fundamental belief 6 in the statement response to the formation on Creation as provided for by the 2005 General Conference session protocol for amending a fundamental belief.

So when it came to fundamental belief 6 (and we will carve out a significant amount of time for discussion about it), our assignment was not to rewrite it, not to change it, but to integrate into it the main ideas of the document's response to the formation on Creation.

Before we discuss the process, Brother Chair, may I make a statement that, although we recommend some so-called changes, we are not recommending a change to our beliefs. All the modifications that will be proposed, in reality, are not changing anything for what we stood for. In fact, we have studied history. We went through all of the protocols, and we studied what those who proposed and wrote and voted on the statement, what they had in mind—all the historical evidence we put together. And we can confirm today that we are not changing anything in our beliefs.

But, you know, with the times, the language is changing, words tend to change in meaning; and so some editorial changes that are suggested are really a language refinement, and do not change, really, what we believe.

I also need to state that in 2005 the General Conference session voted a protocol, how we should go about making editorial changes, additions, and so on. And the protocols that were voted by the General Conference session states very clearly that we should be very careful when it comes to changes to our fundamental beliefs.

Although the only body that can make some editorial changes is the General Conference in session, the protocol says we should at least two years before a session start a process. Every change that is recommended should be discussed worldwide. It should go through appropriate bodies; it should be discussed in every division; it should be discussed at BRICOM; and so on and so on. And so after all that does it come to the session.

And so we are not changing it from the floor. We need to involve the whole church at least for two years in advance so that we really make a serious study and then come to a conclusion.

Now, following the protocol, since we have been assigned to see if there is a need of refining the language of all of the 28 fundamental beliefs, we thought that probably it would be better—and the Annual Council supported us—that before we start, we should announce a special year of listening. And in fact, through our news media, through the *Adventist Review*, *Adventist World*, we announced the year 2011, from October 2011 to October 2012, as the Year of Listening.

We informed our total membership that we were going to see if our fundamental beliefs needed to have some refinement. And we asked all the members, all the institutions, all the organizations, to please send any suggestions to us. And we are very thankful that many took this opportunity, wrote to us, sent their proposals. And then after the Year of Listening, there was a time of evaluation of everything that came in, from October 2012 to October 2013. From those evaluations we prepared a first proposal, and then this proposal we presented to the 2013 Annual Council.

The 2013 Annual Council looked through the proposed, the first draft, and then made a decision to send it out to the world church for discussion. And if there was an input, if there was a desire to change something, add something, delete something, the world church would be able to participate and send back to us.

This was done. We received many recommendations, suggestions. We studied them all, and then we presented them at the 2014 Annual Council.

And now what comes to us is what the 2014 Annual Council, after long process of studying and prayerfully researching, finally approved.

And so today we will be discussing only those items that went through all the process, items that have been approved by the Annual Council, items that have been sent out to all of the delegates in advance for study, and we will discuss them today. I also might inform you that when we received the multitude of suggestions, we followed some rules, and these rules were presented and approved by one of the first Annual Councils. We said, when we informed our membership of the discussion, that we would accept suggestions that deepen a statement without enlarging it too much, that we would reject elaborations of ideas already present in the document, that we would accept important ideas that are not present in the draft and that should be incorporated, that we would accept good suggestions that shorten the draft, and that we would screen out suggestions that primarily promote some personal agendas.

So these were the rules that we followed in the Fundamental Belief Review Committee. Before we sent it to Annual Council, it went through BRICOM, which consists of more than 40 scholars. We asked all the division Biblical Research Committees to study it. It has been available online, made available to everyone. So you can see that a very careful process was followed. And what you have now in your hands is really something that went through a thoughtful, careful, prayerful study. And I'm very glad that all of those improvements are really changing nothing in what we have always believed.

And so, Brother Chairman, in order to start, I will introduce some minor changes that I hope will not need much discussion. And I would plead with you, if you could help us to move forward, because without your help we will not move anywhere.

If we move quickly on the simple items, this will allow us to have plenty of time for some language refinements that are quite significant.

And so having this in mind, Brother Chairman, I must state that we have not touched the preamble. We felt that the preamble is really very good and should remain part of this very important document. Then fundamental belief 13 we have not touched in the main text. The same is true for fundamental beliefs 14, 15, 16, 26, 27, and 28.

The only refinement to these fundamental beliefs is that we have changed the way the Bible references are presented.

Before, they were not presented in a canonical way, meaning you could have first a Matthew reference, then Genesis. Before, the attempt was that the first references would refer more to the beginning of the fundamental belief, then the next reference(s) more to the second sentence, and so on.

But this has not been able to be translated into other languages, and so it has created some confusion. And so we have used the canonical order of presenting the biblical messages, starting from Genesis and then following through to the book of Revelation.

And so, Brother Chairman, I would like to move those statements that really have not been touched, that we have only rearranged the biblical passages and looked through them and other ones here and there. So this is a preamble. We have not touched fundamental beliefs 13, 14, 15, 16, 26, 27, 28.

I move it.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Does that include the preamble?

ARTUR STELE: Yes. We have not touched—

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: It includes the preamble. So you have the motion before you. Let me restate the motion. This is coming to you as a request for approval of the preamble, and numbers 13, 14, 15, 16, 26, 27, and 28.

OK. I see some at the microphone. We have at microphone 2 Louis Torres. No? OK.

Microphone 3, Joshua Shin.

JOSHUA SHIN: Mr. Chairman, thank you so much.

I truly hope that all of the delegates will understand and see the screen clearly—a while ago you just increased the font size, and it is quite helpful for elderly people. I also believe that the audibility needs to be clearer, because, like a while ago, our beloved Elder Ted Wilson is a very gentle speaker, quite low volume. Pastor Artur is a passionate speaker. Everybody clearly understands. So I want to suggest that the sound engineer keep a stable volume inside of this room so all of the delegates will understand and see well and listen well. Thank you so much.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you very much. OK. I see another person at microphone 3, Brother Tuinstra.

JEROEN TUINSTRA: Brother Chairman, I would like to, if possible, change the motion, so that we will vote on each article separately instead of all in one go. I think that would be much fairer to deal with the discussions, and it's much fairer to see what we are actually changing.

Apparently we are told that nothing has changed in these fundamental beliefs, but I think some of the wording does make some points that are a lot stronger than what used to be in the past. So I would like to suggest if we could split up the votes so that we do it per fundamental belief that is going to be changed and vote on each change individually.

Can I make that a motion?

ARTUR STELE: Brother Chair, may I say a few words. The changed fundamental beliefs are all intended to go one by one. But this is a motion that includes the fundamental beliefs that have not been touched. The text has not been touched, not even one word was touched; we only rearranged the biblical references.

JEROEN TUINSTRA: OK. Then I retract my motion.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. And the parliamentarian informs me that that would have to be an issue moved for each motion, if that was desired.

But so far we're lumping these together as a group because there have been no substantive changes, just reordering of Bible texts.

Are you ready to vote on this cluster of fundamental beliefs?

All in favor, please raise your voting cards.

OK. Any opposed?

It is carried. Thank you.

Let's move on.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. The next fundamental belief is number 25. Besides the rearrangement of the biblical text, we have a change of one word. When you look at fundamental belief 25, which you have in your hands and now you will have on the screen, you will see that on line 20 there is one word changed. We used to have "Christ's coming is imminent." And we suggest to use a word that is a direct quote from the Gospel of Matthew, saying "Christ's coming is near." We have received recommendations from a number of people because they saw that we have not used a biblical reference. And it was quite difficult for some languages to translate it, and so we felt that it would be appropriate to use exactly the phrase that is used in the biblical reference.

I move it, Brother.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Seconded.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. It's moved and seconded.

Are there any speakers? I don't see any coming to the microphone. So let us vote.

All in favor of this, please raise your voting cards.

Thank you.

Any opposed?

OK. That is carried.

ARTUR STELE: Brother Chair, the next fundamental belief is number 20, the fundamental belief about the Sabbath. Besides a biblical reference rearrangement, we have changed one word. The fundamental belief starts with "The beneficent Creator." It's an English word that is very difficult for some of us to pronounce, and it has been also a challenge for some to understand it. And the suggestion is to use a clearer and more understandable word, "gracious"—a "gracious Creator."

I move it, Brother Chair.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Seconded.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: It's seconded. I see no one coming to the microphones. And we are ready to vote.

All in favor, please raise your voting cards.

Thank you.

Any opposed?

It is carried.

ARTUR STELE: Brother Chair, the next fundamental belief is number 11. It is one that was added in 2005 called "Growing in Christ." We have received a number of recommendations telling us that we have not in our fundamental beliefs any reference to the need to be involved in social work, in helping others, and so forth.

And so in order to accommodate the requests, we have added a sentence in the fundamental belief "Growing in Christ," number 11. We will see it now on the screen. One added sentence: "We are also called to follow Christ's example by compassionately ministering to the physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of humanity."

I move it, Brother Chair. This is a change along with biblical references.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Seconded.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: It's seconded. No one's coming to the microphone, so it's time for us to vote.

All in favor, please raise your voting cards.

Thank you.

Any opposed? Same sign.

It is carried.

ARTUR STELE: Brother Chairman, the next fundamental belief is number 9, "The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ." Here is only one change. We have added a word, the word "bodily," the "bodily resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph," and so on.

And together, with the rearrangement of the biblical passages, I move this change.

AGUSTIN GALICIA: Seconded.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: It's seconded. Anyone coming to the microphones? I see no one. OK. We'll see if a person is coming.

OK. Delmer Navallo Caro, microphone 1.

DELMER NAVALLO CARO: Mr. Chairman, when we refer to "bodily," a question comes to my mind, that Christ didn't die spiritually. And when He rested in the grave, probably His body only. And we are composed of two things, breath of God and body.

So I'm wondering what does it really mean, "bodily"?

ARTUR STELE: Brother Chair, the question that was raised is addressed in some other fundamental beliefs, but here what we really mean is that Christ really physically resurrected.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Rather than being resurrected into some—

ARTUR STELE: Right. Yes.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: —spiritual kind of form.

OK. I see no one else coming to the microphone. So we're ready to vote. All in favor, please raise your voting cards. Thank you.

Any opposed? The same sign.

It is carried.

ARTUR STELE: Brother Chairman, the next fundamental belief is number 17, "Spiritual Gifts and Ministries." Here we have two changes. One in the beginning, an editorial change.

Somehow, in the 1980s, people preferred, in the English language, to use the word "which," but today we are told by those who are specialists in the language that we should use instead "that." And so here you see the suggestion, the first line: "God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts that" instead of "which."

And then the second change is in the middle. You will see it if you turn the page. Yes. We are deleting the word "apostolic." When we speak about the gifts and so on, we are describing them as

pastoral, evangelistic, and we used to have apostolic and teaching ministries. And it really creates some confusion, and it requires some explanation. And so in order to avoid it, to make it clear, understandable, we just suggested to delete this word, together with some rearrangement of biblical references.

I move it.

AGUSTIN GALICIA: Seconded.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: It's seconded. There is a question on microphone 6, Daniel Duda.

DANIEL DUDA: Mr. Chairman, instead of "apostolic," can we put "cross-cultural"?

ARTUR STELE: Well, it really doesn't respond 100 percent to what the biblical term that was used here was intended to say. So if we want to make any changes, then we would need to refer it back or we have to approve it.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Daniel, do you want to refer this back with your suggestion?

ARTUR STELE: Maybe Angel will give more explanation.

ÁNGEL RODRÍGUEZ: Good morning. The list is based on the spiritual gifts. And we thought that "apostolic" was probably referring to missionaries. And we concluded that the idea of mission is already present in the statement; evangelistic, for instance. It expresses the idea of mission, and the rest of the statement also expresses the idea of mission, so we felt we didn't need it.

If we want to keep it, we should try at least to keep the original intent of the statement, which was to speak or refer to those who do missionary work. It's not about cultural matters. It's about the role of the Spirit empowering people for mission.

So one reason we're deleting it is that it could be misunderstood.

And, second, the idea is already present in the statement, and removing it would not do any damage. Introducing the element of culture will break the flow of the sentence.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Thank you. Let me just make a statement here for clarification. If there are items that you wish to have considered and have them referred back for study, please state that. Otherwise, some of your comments are just ideas and suggestions testing the thought that you have. And

so we need to have you be more explicit if you want our colleagues to take notes and consider the thing that you're suggesting.

So please make that clear if that's your desire.

We have Passmore Mulambo, microphone 6.

PASSMORE MULAMBO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I do appreciate the explanation given, but as I understand this part, it seems to me like a direct quotation from Ephesians 4. And I want to submit that probably we would do better to maintain the direct quotation as we have it in the Bible. Our fundamental beliefs are biblically based, and therefore we may not, for the sake of semantics, want to delete some terminologies that are in the Bible.

So my view is that, since this particular part is a direct quotation from Ephesians 4, we should not extract a word that is part of that very quotation. Thank you.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. That has been offered as counsel. Let's go to Louis Torres at microphone 2.

LOUIS TORRES: Mr. Chairman, I actually support this recommendation, simply because there are many spiritual gifts, but you're suggesting that in this particular case the spiritual gifts are revealed in certain functions; but then you go about to mention all the spiritual gifts. So I support it simply because you're trying to allude to the fact that the church recognizes spiritual gifts, and some of them are pastoral and evangelistic. Thank you.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you. Thank you. Let's go to microphone 3, Kevin Rhamie.

KEVIN RHAMIE: I believe that the world needs to know that we believe in the apostolic gift. It's one of the main gifts listed in the Bible. Even though we do not use that terminology currently, it's listed, and it needs to show that we believe in it. I don't believe that it's talking about missionaries. The apostolic gift shown in the book of Acts was not so much that of missionaries.

And I move that this be referred back to the committee so that we can maintain the biblical text.

ARTUR STELE: Brother Chair, there is not a big burden to keep it or to delete it. And it would be good to see if this is a desire of the body to keep it or to delete it. And we could solve it right now, maybe.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK, would you like to—I can accept that as a referral, but perhaps the body would like to make a decision on this now.

KEVIN RHAMIE: Right.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. We have a motion for referral. Let's use that as a tool. If you want to see this changed, you will vote in favor—

Let's just vote, then, on—

By the way, was that seconded? Is there a second? I see a second. OK. Now we're good.

And so we're voting on the motion to refer it back to the committee.

Does anyone at the microphones now wish to speak to this?

OK. These are for the main motion.

I see, according to our scheme here, no one at the microphones—oh. Here's one. OK.

Microphone 6, Brother Mathonsi. Yes. Mathonsi.

WALTER ALANA HUAPAYA: Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think it's very important to keep the word "apostolic" in this case—

QEDUMUSA MATHONSI: Thank you so much. I have the feeling of the motion. I want to support the motion, but I also want to appreciate the statement that the chairperson of this committee has made that we could resolve it here.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. The next one to speak, microphone 4, Jiwan Moon.

JIWAN MOON: Good morning, Mr. Chair. I'm not a biblical scholar, but I believe the word "apostle" comes from the Greek word "apostelo," which is a combination of "apo" and "stelo," which is being sent forward. So just to assume that it's speaking of being sent away as a missionary, I think we are applying the meaning of the word to just the one context. So I'm speaking in support of the motion that we bring this back, that we study it further, the significance of the word "apostle." Thank you.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you. Microphone 3, Brother Temesgen Besha.

TEMESGEN BESHA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm standing here to speak supporting the motion to refer back—to maintain the word “apostolic”—because I think, since this is in the Bible, we need to maintain it regardless of how people define or translate it today. Thank you.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. And we have another one, microphone 3, Edward Tupai.

EDWARD TUPAI: Thank you, Brother Chair. My comment is for consideration of the committee. And it's just to say that maybe you should consider the word “apostleship” rather than the word “apostolic.”

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you for that comment. Microphone 2, Kevin Nwaigwe.

KEVIN NWAIGWE: All right. I want to look at the comment from the committee on the word “apostolic.” The committee is suggesting that if this term is retained, it will need to be clearly defined, or it could be misunderstood. And the chairman has said we could resolve this matter here, and otherwise the committee is open to deleting or retaining.

And the only concern is the definition of the word if it is retained.

Could the chairman please suggest to us a possible definition they had proposed if this word is retained? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: I'm not sure that we want to lengthen unduly our fundamental beliefs with many definitions. Now, I will defer to Dr. Stele if he has a comment on that. But normally we don't like to vote changes or things right on the floor, so I'd rather have it go back through the committee and they bring it back.

If we were more unanimous, consensual, on this, then perhaps we could handle it here.

We have a speaker at microphone 6, Maunga Naini.

MAUNGA NAINI: Mr. Chairman, this appears to me like a person preaching. Even when you are quoting a verse, you can choose not to mention certain words. Even when you are writing, you can use ellipsis marks and leave out certain words. And I don't see any quotation marks in that passage that you are looking at. So, for me, really dropping the word “apostolic” would not make much difference. So I

agree with the recommendation from the chairman on leaving out that word from that passage that you are studying right now. Thank you.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you. Microphone 3, Stefan Giuliani.

STEFAN GIULIANI: Mr. Chairman, I move the previous question.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. That motion is to stop debate on this subject and go to a vote on this item. I see a second on this. It's not debatable, so we will need to vote, and we need a two-thirds majority in order for this to pass.

OK. Are you ready to vote?

All in favor, raise your voting cards.

Any opposed?

It is carried. So we have closed debate on this motion.

We will return to the motion to refer fundamental belief 17 back to the Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee.

OK. Are you ready to vote on this motion?

Please raise your voting cards if you're in favor of referral.

OK. Thank you.

If you're opposed to referral, please raise your voting cards.

OK. The motion has been defeated by the will of this body.

OK. So we are still here with the item as it has been presented to us.

Now we can . . .

So now we'll go back, unless—

Oh. We have two people at microphones, since we're back at the main motion. Neil Nedley.

NEIL NEDLEY: I wanted to call the question on this motion as well.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Question on this main motion to accept fundamental belief 17. Now I see a second.

OK. Now, again, we need a two-thirds majority.

All in favor of this motion, please raise your voting cards.

OK. Thank you.

Any opposed, raise your voting card.

The motion is carried. So we will close debate on number 17.

And we will now vote on this main motion.

The motion is to accept number 17 with the two small changes as have been presented to us.

All those in favor of accepting number 17, please raise your voting cards. Thank you.

Any opposed?

It is carried.

Thank you. Let's move on.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you, Brother Chair. Let's go now to fundamental belief 21, Stewardship.

Here, besides a rearrangement of biblical references, we have tried to use a language that would include both men and women. Here the word "men" was used. In the past, the English word "men" was more often used for both genders, but it's not the case so much today. And so in order to make it clear that all of us are invited to be faithful stewards, we are replacing "men" with "fellow human beings."

And then the second change is that we have used the word "tithes" in the plural. And that's confusing people, and people were thinking that we are really expecting people to return the first, the second, the third, and forgetting that we are not the biblical Israel, the state of Israel, where we have to pay all the taxes for the poor and so on. And we really are speaking here about the tithe. And so in order avoid the confusion, we put it in the singular, "tithe."

And then closer to the end, again, to make sure that we include both genders, we have used "stewards" in the plural. And it's also in agreement and in harmony with the whole fundamental belief, because whenever we speak about stewards, we use the plural.

And so together with the rearrangement of biblical texts, I move it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Seconded.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: I hear a second.

Are there any comments?

I think Neil Nedley already spoke, unless he wants to speak again.

OK. So please strike that line from our screen.

Oh. Is Neil Nedley here?

NEIL NEDLEY: I am here. I actually did not speak before. But I just wanted us to make sure that we fulfill what the desire was from the last General Conference session.

Number 6 was the priority we heard from our president. It's past 11:00 a.m., and many of these others might have similar discussions on these minor word changes. We wanted to be done with this process by noon. I would suggest that after we deal with this stewardship belief, we then dedicate the time to the major issue of fundamental belief 6. And then if we have leftover time, we can deal with the minor ones after that.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. This does not pertain to the motion that's on the floor, which deals with the stewardship item, but we can consider that suggestion after this motion is dealt with.

OK. I see no one listed for wanting to speak on number 21. Are we ready to vote? If you're ready, all in favor, please raise your voting cards. Thank you.

Any opposed?

It is carried. Thank you.

ARTUR STELE: Brother Chair, I'm really afraid to destroy the good mood that is on the floor. While we're moving, let's move. You know, I think we have a few items that are of importance, but we can do it very quickly so that we can really come to fundamental belief 6.

Number 22, I believe, will not take much time. It's "Christian Behavior." We have received recommendations to include several aspects, such as not wearing weapons, and so on and so on and so on, and where to find the expression that would include all of that, and also then how to explain the word "heavenly principles."

And so in order to help, to accommodate this request, we have suggested the following change: "We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with" and instead of "the

principals of heaven,” “biblical principles.” And then we have added “in all aspects of personal and social life.” And then on the next line, again, a grammatical change from “which” to “that.”

And together with the biblical references, I move that.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Seconded.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: It’s seconded.

Is there anyone wishing to speak?

I see no one on the screen.

Let’s vote. All in favor of this, please raise your voting cards.

Any opposed?

It’s carried.

ARTUR STELE: Thank you. Brother Chairman, the next fundamental belief is 23, “Marriage and the Family.” Here we have several changes, but I think they will be supported.

One of the major changes is to include single people when we emphasize the family. Where are the single people mentioned in our fundamental beliefs? They’re also part of the family of God.

And so in order to provide for that, we had to move the last sentence from line 25 to lines 20 and 21. So no change, but just repositioning in order to make space to refer to the single people. Because then when we speak about the family of God, we speak and say that the family of God, which embraces both single and married persons. This is one change.

And then the word “disciplinarian” we have changed, and now we say that “Christ is a loving, tender, and carrying guide.” And then in two places, instead of “marriage partners,” we have introduced the expression “a man and a woman.” Because it is in accordance what really was meant in 1980, but the language has changed, times are changing, and this is really what was meant there. But today it can mean different things, and so we suggest to replace this with the phrase “a man and a woman.”

And I move it, together with the changes—

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Seconded.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: It’s seconded.

I see microphone 3, Ray Hartwell.

RAY HARTWELL: Mr. Chairman, as a lifelong Seventh-day Adventist, a Christ-filled Seventh-day Adventist, and a Bible-believing Seventh-day Adventist, I strongly encourage the delegates to vote in favor of number 23, especially where it identifies marriage as being between a man and a woman.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you. Number 3, again, Jeroen Tuinstra.

JEROEN TUINSTR: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a comment on the comment that is written there. It's comment TKB43 and TKB44.

I'm actually surprised about the language that is being used there, especially in light of a previous conference that was held in South Africa. In the comment it says that it wants to clarify that the term "partners" cannot be misused by those promoting homosexuality. It sounds here in the language as if we're promoting a drink or we're promoting a new article or something like that. And this type of language is quite denigrating to people of homosexual persuasion.

So I don't know what the status of the comments in the sidelines are. Are they kept on record? Do they disappear after this? If they are kept on record, I would like to see it amended in a way that it reflects a mature way of discussing this topic by stating that it could be misunderstood as same-sex partners.

Instead of trying to accommodate or at least trying to help our homosexual brothers and sisters to have some sort of place in the church, not be pushed to the side if they're promoting homosexuality, as if it's something that you can catch or something that you can adopt or something that you're not born with. So what is the status of the comments in the sideline?

ARTUR STELE: Brother Chair, the purpose of the comments is just to make it easier for people to understand what was in the mind of the committee and, when it was presented to Annual Council, what was meant. So it's not part of the fundamental beliefs in the main text.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Nor is it included in the voting.

JEROEN TUINSTR: They will go on record, I believe, or not? They will remain somewhere in an archive?

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Yes. It's really not being voted on, so it's not official in any way.

JEROEN TUINSTRA: It's quite disturbing that language like this is used at such a high level in the church with so many intelligent people.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: It's not really different from what our chair, Dr. Stele, is saying orally to us, but we will not enshrine his words as an official comment. It is explanatory, and it certainly could be worded differently.

JEROEN TUINSTRA: OK. Thank you.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Lawrence Geraty, microphone 3.

LAWRENCE GERATY: Yes. I would like to suggest that on line 17 we keep the same terminology that we've lived with for several years. We already have "a man and a woman" in line 12, so that is clear. So I would suggest a different terminology, the one that was originally there, because there is a difference.

You can talk about couples as a woman and a man and their characteristics and so on. But when you talk about marriage partners, there is a closeness that is conveyed by that phrase that I hate to lose. So my recommendation is, since we already have in line 12 "a man and a woman," let's not be redundant in 17. Let's keep "marriage partners."

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK.

ARTUR STELE: It depends on what the body wishes.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Dr. Geraty, did you want to have that referred back for consideration?

LAWRENCE GERATY: Yes.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. We will then vote on that.

TED N. C. WILSON: Fellow delegates, as we know, this issue is a very contentious issue around the world. We want to be loving and kind and Christlike to everyone. As we have stated, everyone is to be treated with respect and as someone that Christ wishes to redeem. However, when it comes to an

understanding from the Bible as to marriage, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is very clear. And in this fundamental belief, we want to leave no ambiguity about it.

[Applause.]

We want people to know that Seventh-day Adventists, who follow the Bible not only in teaching, but in practice and in loving our fellow human beings, believe that marriage is only between a man and a woman.

[Applause.]

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. We have a motion before us to refer this back to the committee. You can vote it up or down. And we have no speakers wanting to speak to this particular motion to refer.

And so we will vote. Are you ready?

All in favor of the motion to refer, please raise your voting cards.

OK. Thank you.

Those opposed to referring.

[Applause.]

OK. The motion has lost. So we can continue.

We have a few others that want to speak to this motion. Emmanuel Mwale, microphone 6.

EMMANUEL MWALE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think what we have done relative to fundamental belief 23 gives the church much confidence. Because this is one of the contentious issues that we have in the church right now.

And I wanted to mention that the intent of what was done here to remove “marriage partners” is really to help the church. Because in the jurisdiction in Europe, which I’ll not mention for security reasons, there are two marriage acts, one that goes with the definition of marriage that we have here, and another one that is the civil partnership act that provides for homosexuals. And so because of this, we have to be very straightforward as we have done, and we don’t have to change anything. Thank you.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Thank you.

Microphone 3, Ray Roennfeldt.

RAY ROENNFELDT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm referring to line 21 and the expression there, "the earmarks of the final gospel message." And I wonder whether we couldn't just simplify that. That's a strange expression and, I think, probably difficult to translate. And it could just be worded as "increasing family closeness is one result of the final gospel message."

And I'd like to recommend that it be referred back to make that change.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: We were just discussing the fact that since we just voted whether to refer back or not was the prevailing factor or whether the fact that this was on a little different subject would enable us to consider a referral. And I think I will give the benefit to the speaker here, and we will accept that as a motion to refer back to the committee for that particular suggestion. And we will vote on this matter of referring fundamental belief 23 back to the committee for the consideration of that particular item.

OK. All who are ready can vote.

Those in favor of referring back, please indicate your cards.

Thank you.

Those who are opposed, please show your cards.

[Applause.]

OK. The motion has been defeated. We're back to the main motion, and we have quite a long list of those who wish to speak. We'll go to microphone 2, to Brother Nwankpa. Please speak to us.

ONYEBUCHI NWANKPA: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank the Lord for the way the church is looking at the issue of marriage and family—

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: If I could interrupt you, we have a point of order on microphone 3. Let's hear that, and then we'll come back to you.

STEFAN GIULIANI: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to remind us that we agreed the last couple of days not to applaud, so if we could go back to that and not applaud whatever statements are made.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you. Let us remind ourselves of that commitment. OK.

Please, brother, please continue your thought.

ONYEBUCHI NWANKPA: Thank you very much. I just want to say that I thank God for the way the church is dealing with the issue of marriage and family, not to leave anybody in doubt as to what we believe, where we stand. But I have a concern. And that concern is that we must keep the position of marriage, because marriage—the way marriage is conducted—defines a very important aspect of our ethics, our Christian ethics. But today we look and we see that in many places some young people, male and female, come together, live together before the official marriage. And sometimes you discover that at the end of the day these end up—after living together for some time—to be recognized as husband and wife.

And we know that such living together before, no matter whatever social environment they are coming from, from the biblical point of view amounts to fornication. I want to ask or suggest that since we are talking about marriage and family here, something be put here to clarify the fact or the stand of the church on this in order to also help the sanctity of marriage.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: We have a point of order on microphone 2, Sadrail Saint-Ulysse.

SADRAIL SAINT-ULYSSE: Mr. Chair, I'd like to thank you for the work done making sure there is no ambiguity, and I think the committee did just that.

I would now like to call the question on the motion.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: That's not a point of order. You'll have to wait your turn in line.

SADRAIL SAINT-ULYSSE: OK.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: That's not—

SADRAIL SAINT-ULYSSE: What do we do if we want to call the previous question, sir?

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Well, when it's your turn to speak, you can make the same speech.

SADRAIL SAINT-ULYSSE: I will come back and do so, if somebody doesn't do it before me.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Very good. We have microphone 5, John Bradshaw.

JOHN BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to call the question on the motion.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Is there a second? I see many.

OK. Again, we're ready to vote. And we need two-thirds majority for this to pass.

All in favor of closing debate and moving back to the previous question, raise your cards.

Thank you.

Any opposed? The motion is carried.

So now we will return to voting on fundamental belief 23, as the suggestions have been made.

Are you ready to vote?

All in favor of accepting fundamental belief 23 on marriage and family, please raise your voting cards.

Thank you.

Any opposed?

It is carried. Thank you. Let's move on.

ARTUR STELE: Brother Chair, since this item took a little bit more time and in order to give enough attention to fundamental belief 6, let's go now to the fundamental beliefs 6 and 8, because they are connected.

Fundamental belief 6, "Creation," and fundamental belief 8, "The Great Controversy." Because the assignment that we have received was to harmonize fundamental belief 6 with a response to an Affirmation of Creation. And since some elements that go in the document are really better to present in the area of the great controversy, because we didn't want to speak about the fall in the fundamental belief of Creation and the flood and so on. And this why we have implemented in such a way that you will find part of the changes in the fundamental belief 6 and part in the fundamental belief 8.

Fundamental belief 6 now reads, to begin with, "God is Creator of all things." And then the rest follows. As you can see, we have introduced language that came from the Affirmation of Creation document that refers to the historical account of Creation, that refers to the recent six-day creation, and especially: "His creative work, performed and completed in six literal days that together with the Sabbath constituted the same unit of time that we call a week today."

And also we have changed a biblical passage here, rearranged the biblical passages and added—in the fundamental belief itself—instead of quoting Genesis 1:1, we are quoting the fourth commandment. And this is important for the theological consideration of chapter 1 in Genesis, because it allows two different interpretations of understanding of Genesis 1:1.

Then when we go to the fundamental belief about the great controversy, we have implemented here a reference to the historical account of Genesis 1 to 11 and referring to the flood as worldwide here.

And so together with the rearrangement with the biblical passages, I would like to move these two fundamental beliefs and open them for discussion, fundamental beliefs 6 and 8.

AGUSTIN GALICIA: Seconded.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Thank you.

OK. We have a motion before us to consider both number 6 and number 8. And we have quite a list of speakers. Let's go to microphone 3, Lawrence Geraty.

LAWRENCE GERATY: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to applaud the work of the editors who have worked hard to revise and improve this whole Statement of Fundamental Beliefs.

Having been a delegate at the GC session in Dallas, Texas, 1980, when they were adopted, I would say that the process we're engaged in now is what was intended back then, if there were going to be changes.

The editors have been especially successful at employing gender-neutral language so that all Adventist believers feel included.

I'm sure I speak for all our delegates when I say that we are grateful to the committee for that.

A few changes, however, appear to be designed to exclude, and some of these are found in number 6, on Creation.

Certainly all the delegates hold that the Bible is to be our authority. In fact, the very first line of our fundamental beliefs, line 12, expresses it well when it says that the Bible is our only creed.

So the problem I wish to address is the proposed wording in the creation statement that is nonbiblical. There are interpretations that have been inserted, interpretations that are possible, and may

even be right, because they come from the writings of Ellen White, but they are not in the Bible. Thus they open us to the challenge and charge by critics that we base our beliefs on Ellen White and not on the Bible.

We say we are committed to *sola scriptura*, but in these proposed changes we suggest otherwise.

Are we Protestants or aren't we? Do we again want to open ourselves to the charge of being a cult and basing our beliefs on Ellen White—

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Time is up.

LAWRENCE GERATY: —or on the Bible?

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Can you conclude your remarks with a concluding statement?

LAWRENCE GERATY: Yes. I have just a few more paragraphs, and I'll be brief.

Why do we need to insert on line 35—

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: I'm sorry. We have to apply the rules equitably, and so we will not be able to continue. And we'll have to move to the next speaker. There is a point of order from microphone 2, Kirk Nugent.

KIRK NUGENT: Just as a courtesy to the speakers, could some indication be given when they maybe have a minute remaining?

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Well, we have these big screens up here, but I suppose we could do that, yes.

OK. Let's go to microphone 3, Ray Hartwell.

LAWRENCE GERATY: May I be given the privilege of—any chance, maybe, to return?

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Well—

LAWRENCE GERATY: I mean, I have a very brief statement that is carefully crafted. I've used up my time in commending the committee for their work. If you had told me that I would have only a minute to speak, I could have gone to what my concern is.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: We have agreed to give each person two minutes, and you had a full two minutes.

LAWRENCE GERATY: Was that announced earlier this morning?

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Yes. That was voted upon.

LAWRENCE GERATY: I apologize. I was attending to another issue.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: If you have a motion, I'm willing to recognize that. But other than that, I don't think we can continue discussing the matter.

OK, Ray.

RAY HARTWELL: Mr. Chairman, while I'm pretty much in favor of both of these, there have been some suggestions from the Adventist Theological Seminary. And so I would like to refer back.

For belief 6, stating it this way: "God is the Creator of all things. He's revealed in Scripture the authentic and historical account of His creative activity. God created the universe, including the angels and unfallen worlds. Later, in a recent six-day creation, the Lord made this world's dominions of," and then continue with the rest of the statement.

Then in belief 8, on line 28, where it speaks of the worldwide flood as presented in the historical account of Genesis 1-11, I would refer to the committee to use the word "global" either in conjunction with "worldwide" or in place of "worldwide." There are certain Bible scholars that identify "worldwide" as being only the world the Bible writer knew of in their own personal experience, but not a global flood. And I stand in favor of the biblical understanding being a global and worldwide flood completely.

So, Mr. Chairman, I'm asking that we refer these back. I don't know if I need to make this a motion.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: This can be made as a motion.

RAY HARTWELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move to refer these back based on the comments I've suggested.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Is there a second to that?

ARTUR STELE: Brother Chair, may I say a few words here.

We have received, especially after the vote of the Annual Council, a number of letters, suggestions, and so on. And what the previous speaker suggested was requested by a number of people,

especially with a reference that the language that was now suggested was used in the document Affirmation of Creation with regard to the flood.

So maybe, instead of using the parliamentary rules, maybe we could, without making all kinds of motions, just listen to the recommendations. And then by common consent, we will take it back and bring it back tomorrow after we work on it, but use now as a time for getting us more input.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Yes. OK. We will not vote on this. We will accept it as a friendly suggestion. The committee will take it back and review it, so we just want to hear your comments of things that they should consider.

The next speaker is microphone 6, Megan Mole.

MEGAN MOLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just preface with an apology that I work as an editor, so you may see me again occasionally. I have a couple of grammatical concerns about 6 and 8, and I'll try to go through them as quickly as possible.

In lines 34 and 35 we talk about authentic and historical account of creative activity. And I feel that those are actually synonyms, so I would like to propose that we amend that to "trustworthy account of His creative activity."

In line 36 the phrase "the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them" are in quotation marks, which is the only time a biblical quote is in quotation marks in the fundamental beliefs, so I was a bit confused about that. So if possible, I'd also like to amend that to remove the quotation marks.

In line 40 we have the phrase "the same unit of time that we call a week today." And I find that language grammatically and, for purposes of clarity, problematic. For example, in Japan in 2011 with the massive earthquake, we found that scientifically a day was actually shortened by a few seconds as a result of that earthquake. Comparatively, for such a small event, if we then imagine a worldwide flood, how much more impact could that have on the length of days or the length of hours or that sort of thing?

So we could perhaps amend line 40 to instead say, "together with the Sabbath, constituted the first earthly week."

And then, finally, in fundamental belief 8, on lines 28 and 29—

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Twenty seconds.

MEGAN MOLE: Yes.

Here you have “as presented in the historical account of Genesis 1-11.” I find this reference unusual, and again, this is something that doesn’t appear in the rest of the fundamental beliefs. So I’d like to amend those to remove the specific reference, as it occurs also at the end of the fundamental belief.

Thank you very much.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you. A point of order on microphone 4, Eugen Hartwich.

EUGEN HARTWICH: Mr. Chair, I don’t believe if it is possible for a translator to have enough time to translate what was said, because a fellow delegate told me that it’s not possible to understand, because people speak too fast. So I ask you to speak slower. Is it possible to take this into consideration?

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: We can ask. Of course, the speakers are working against the clock because they’re being timed, being allowed only two minutes. But let’s remember that we have people who do not speak or understand English, and there’s a lot of translators up in that upper booth there who are trying to help them understand what we are saying.

So keep that in mind as you speak.

Let’s go to microphone 4, Jiří Moskala.

JIŘÍ MOSKALA: Thank you, Brother Chairman. And I will try to speak slowly.

I would like to commend and thank the Writing Committee for the enormous work. The doctrine of creation is very dear and important to us. I am convinced that our theology and our church stands or fall on the creation doctrine.

I would like to recommend three refinements to the Writing Committee for their further consideration.

First, the first three sentences in this fundamental belief gives the impression that God is the Creator of all things at once; namely, that He created the entire universe, together with life on earth.

However, we as Seventh-day Adventists strongly believe that the great controversy originated before the Creation week of Genesis 1.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: One minute.

JIRÍ MOSKALA: So, in order to harmonize it and have time for Satan's rebellion in heaven, I recommend to insert between the second and the third sentence the word "later."

Second, it would be helpful to clarify what it means that God created all things. It is interesting that our 28 fundamental beliefs presuppose the existence of angels, but it is never stated how and when they came into existence, that they were created by God. It would be fitting to include such a statement.

Third, it would be very useful to explain that the phrase "the heavens and the earth and the sea" of Exodus 20:11 refer to this world's three domains and that this text is not speaking about the whole universe.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Time is up. Thank you.

JIRÍ MOSKALA: So thank you for all three important items.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Let's go to microphone 6, Willem Altink.

WILLEM ALTINK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

I'm not so much in favor of adopting the changes for number 6. As the preamble says to our fundamental beliefs, the Bible is our creed. We have already a lot of explanations in the 28 fundamental beliefs. I think there is a danger if we go too far in explaining, especially from the point of view of mission.

If we want to bring people to Christ and the good news of the Sabbath, people need to have time to grow into the understanding of the Bible. If you make it too strict, people will feel that it is not really an invitation. Give room for the believer's growth and give room to the Spirit.

It is not good to accept the changes. We will exclude members who are very loyal to the church. They agree with the present wording, but the changes will exclude them. And I think that would be really a pity. It is important that the fundamental beliefs include the whole body of believers of our church.

Thank you very much.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you. Just in time. We have a point of order on microphone 6, Bertold Hibner.

BERTOLD HIBNER: Mr. Chairman, I would like to suggest that time be extended to two minutes 30 seconds for the presenter. I think that will help. And also four minutes with translation. Thank you.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Is that a motion?

BERTOLD HIBNER: Yes, please, Mr. Chairman.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Is there a second? I see a second.

OK. Seeing no one at this point in line to speak to this particular motion, we will proceed with the vote.

If you are in favor of the motion to lengthen these times slightly, vote in favor. If you want to keep it as it is, vote against.

Are you ready? All in favor, please raise your voting cards.

OK. Thank you.

All of those opposed, please raise your voting cards.

The motion is defeated. We will maintain the timings that we have at the present time.

Let me go to microphone 4, Richard Davidson.

RICHARD DAVIDSON: Brother Chair, I would simply like to support the three suggestions made by my colleague, Dr. Moskala. I believe that the quotation of the fourth commandment, without any further explanation, could be understood by many outside the church as referring to the creation of the whole universe in six literal days, and this would leave no room for the great controversy occurring before creation week, as is clear in many other biblical passages.

Thank you.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you very much. Let's go to microphone 3, Jerilyn Burtch.

JERILYN BURTCH: Thank you. When certain topics or questions come up with my children, I give them an age-appropriate response. I tell them what they need to know at this point in their lives. The differences in comprehension ability and maturity between my children and me is diminishing every day.

So when I look at the accounts of creation and realize that the difference in maturity level and comprehension ability between God and me is immeasurable, I have no reason to expect that God gave me a complete technical explanation of how our eternal God created the world. What I find in Scripture is what I need to know now.

Knowing the questions that we would be facing today, God let Scripture go to press without a clear statement that the creation week was the same unit of time that we call a week today. There is no “thus saith the Lord” on this point. Genesis mentions that the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the deep before God said anything, but it doesn’t specify how long that water or the rocks that contained it had been there.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: 30 seconds.

JERILYN BURTCH: Scripture is silent on that point. Where Scripture shouts, I must shout. Where it whispers, I must whisper. Let’s keep our statements of belief focused close to Scripture and keep our attention as a church on our mission, which is to call out, “Worship Him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water.”

Thank you.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you. OK. Let’s go to microphone 5, John Bradshaw.

JOHN BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I look at the revised fundamental belief 6 and the slight revision to fundamental belief 8, please allow me to say two things briefly.

First, I recognize, particularly in light of listening to some of my fellow delegates here, that there may indeed be a need for an editorial revision or revisions here and there. So I am not suggesting that there should not be any revisions of those natures.

But as I look at these statements as they're being sent to us, I see that they do really very little. All they do is clearly outline what we believe as a church. That's all. It's a very small thing they do.

I look at fundamental belief 6, and I say, "We believe that." I read it again, and I say, "This is what my church teaches." And so I merely wish to stand here and say thank you to the authors for clearly and succinctly doing very little, simply demonstrating what we believe.

I would be very concerned if this position had come back and was a reflection of what we do not believe. But as I see it—and again, please understand, necessary editorial changes notwithstanding—I look at this with thanks in my heart, and I say, "Yes, yes, yes. This is what we believe."

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Amen. Thank you very much for that statement. Let's go to microphone 1. We have Delmer Navallo Caro.

DELMER NAVALLO CARO: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, to come back over and over.

I'm not comfortable with some words here in number 6, and I would like to take them into consideration for the committee.

On line 34, add "is the only."

On line 35 it says "In a recent six-day creation." The week was not created before Creation. That's why I would suggest to cancel or to erase the word "recent," because the week exists since God created our world, and that's biblically supported.

And the third comment I have is on line 38—

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Seven seconds.

DELMER NAVALLO CARO: —His completed creative work. God is not creative only, and there has to be a word that gives us the idea that He is almighty.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Your time is up. Thank you very much.

OK, Lloyd Gibson, microphone 4.

L. JAMES GIBSON: Mr. Chair, I stand in support of the suggestions that have been made to replace the word "worldwide" in fundamental belief 8 with the word "global" and to clarify some of the aspects of belief 6 that have been suggested by others.

I believe that if we are to give the message of creation with a loud voice. As Revelation 14 says, our witness must be clear without ambiguity.

I would point out that this is not dependent strictly on Ellen White. There are millions of Baptists who believe in a six-day creation and have no use for Ellen White. This is a biblical teaching.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Thank you very much. And we'll go to microphone 3, Jeroen Tuinstra.

JEROEN TUINSTRA: Mr. Chairman, I have two questions, and I would like to say something else, too.

But what do we mean by the word "recent"? Is this 6,000, 50,000, or 1 billion?

Are we actually saying that the heavens and the earth, the cosmos, is created in a recent six-day creation, so actually not allowing any space between Genesis 1, verse 1, and Genesis 1, verse 2?

And a previous speaker was referring to what "we" believe. There are many Adventist scientists and educators that were happy with the previous fundamental belief as it was stated and are not happy with what is actually happening here. So when we're talking about "we," are we including those Adventist scientists, or are we excluding them?

And I have a feeling that the changes that are applied in this fundamental belief are actually trying to silence discussion in the church between—

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: Forty seconds.

JEROEN TUINSTRA: —theologians and scientists. And it seems like the discussion is trying to be solved by just making a dogmatic statement, which is very un-Adventist, I have to say.

So I remain with only two questions: What do we mean by "recent," and are we saying here that the whole cosmos was created in six days?

ARTUR STELE: Brother Chair, in order not to say that the whole cosmos was created in the six days, we have changed the quotation from Genesis 1:1 to the quotation from the fourth commandment. And I understand that it is a scholarly discussion and not everyone will understand this change. And this is why the seminary has suggested here today maybe to look and if we could clarify somewhere.

Concerning the word “recent,” no one knows exactly the number of years. To clarify the word “recent,” we have added here a reference to Genesis 6.

BENJAMIN SCHOUN: OK. Thank you. I think we’re going to have to close our discussion for the morning. All of those who have indicated an interest in speaking, I believe that the plan is to take this up right after lunch, and we will finish the discussion on these items. The fact is that we hope that you will be back on time when we start this afternoon, and you’ll have a chance to speak then.

I have a couple of announcements here, one from our Nominating Committee chair, Homer Trecartin. He says to remind the members of the Nominating Committee to eat lunch at their assigned location, then to meet at 1:00 p.m. in the Nominating Committee room.

So all of you who are members of the Nominating Committee, please pay attention to those two announcements. Eat your lunch in your assigned location, and meet at 1:00 p.m. in the Nominating Committee room.

I repeat the announcement I made this morning: If you have not yet turned in your electronic voting devices, you can do that right after we close here this morning. Go to the tables where individuals were checking you in to speak, and they will take your voting devices and clear your name from the responsibility.

I would like to close the session at this time. Sarah Wassef is going to come and have a closing prayer. So let us stand for that prayer.

[Prayer.]