

ADVENTIST REVIEW

JUNE 12, 2022

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ADRA

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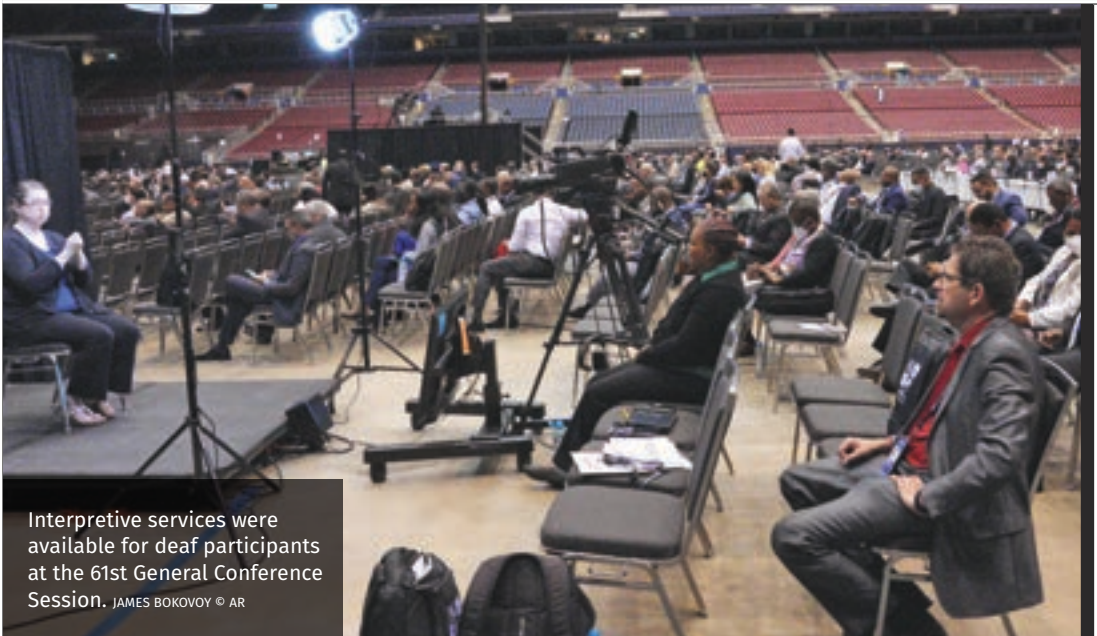


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impact you
are making.

Imagine the reports on the sea of glass; perhaps that's why it takes days to ascend to the kingdom when Jesus comes

Shawn Boonstra, p. 7

NEWS



Interpretive services were available for deaf participants at the 61st General Conference Session. JAMES BOKOVOY © AR

SIGNS OF FAITH

THE SESSION EXPERIENCE OF A DEAF DELEGATE.

DEBBIE MICHEL, ADVENTIST REVIEW

In a moment worth noting, Jeffrey Jordan stood at the microphone to advocate for making churches a more welcoming place for people with disabilities. Speaking as the first Deaf delegate at a General Conference [GC] Session, Jordan made an impassioned case for inclusivity because, as he sees it, “every person has a possibility that God can use.”

Jordan is pushing to remove the stigma of identifying individuals solely through their disability and seeing them instead as people with their own passions, interests, and unique personalities.

When the Session vote was taken

to create opportunities and recommend ways to “assist in the discovery of roles or ministries that bring a sense of meaning and fulfillment,” Jordan was happy to see his church stand with a group that often remains at the margins.

ROLE MODEL

As the first Deaf delegate, Jordan says, he’s honored to serve as a representative for the millions of Deaf across the globe.

Born and raised in California, he was the only Deaf person in his hearing family. While a student at California State University at Northridge, he

was involved in lay ministry to the Deaf at the Northridge Seventh-day Adventist Church. Other Deaf students attended and were blessed to have their own church service, where he’d preach from time to time. During this time, he met his future wife, who was pursuing studies for a career in sign language interpreting.

He was impressed to go into ministry and enrolled at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. The university provided sign language interpreters for his class lectures, and he eventually graduated with his Master of Divinity degree.

Jordan went on to become pastor of the Southern Deaf Fellowship congregation in Tennessee, which has 77 members today, with others watching online each week. In addition to his pastoral responsibilities, he is the associate coordinator for the GC's Adventist Possibility Ministries.

REMOVING THE STIGMA

Jordan says he hopes to continue raising awareness about the Deaf community of faith, that they are a people group with a specific language and a specific culture who can assist in the running and the functioning of the church.

"I want hearing people to understand that my church, their church, includes Deaf members," he says. "They can run and function just like a hearing church, whether it be [special] services—marriages, funerals—or regular church services."

LIFE AS A DEAF DELEGATE

Most delegates can move around the floor while still keeping up with what's happening on the stage. But that's a challenge for someone who gets all their information through their eyes.

"Other people have an advantage that they can multitask, they can write, or they can do other things as they're still listening," he says. "It's different for me, because I have to rely on the interpreter."

But, he says, "I will be honest with you; while it is tiring, I have thoroughly enjoyed the time." 🗨️



DELEGATES REAFFIRM ROLE OF THE BIBLE AND THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

VOTED RESOLUTION AND STATEMENT UNDERLINE PIVOTAL PLACE BOTH HAVE IN THE ADVENTIST CHURCH.

MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

Delegates to the 2022 General Conference (GC) Session in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, voted a Resolution on the Holy Bible and a Statement of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen G. White. Both votes took place during the eleventh business meeting, on the afternoon of June 9.

RESOLUTION ON THE BIBLE

The resolution on the Bible states, in part, that delegates to the GC Session express their "con-

vicition that the Bible is the inspired and revealed Word of God." It also states that "through the Holy Scriptures, God has revealed Himself and His will to humanity," adding that "the whole Bible is inspired and must be understood as a whole in order to arrive at correct conclusions as to the truth on any revealed topic."

In another part of the resolution, delegates emphasize that they "believe that the Bible is the prophetic Word of God," and add, "We



commit ourselves to prayerfully study and follow the Bible, the living and effective Word of God.”

In the last two paragraphs, the document states in part that delegates “also believe that the Bible leads . . . to a living relationship with God through Jesus Christ,” and adds, “We express our deep gratitude to the Lord because in the Scriptures we find hope to live amidst the challenges of the world.” It ends up by stating that “the Bible tells of God’s plan,” including when He will “put an end to sin and sinners forever and establish righteousness in the new earth.”

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE

Likewise, delegates voted to approve the Statement of Confidence

in the Writings of Ellen G. White, which, among other items, emphasizes the connection between the Bible and her writings. In it, delegates state that they “express . . . deep gratitude for God’s prophetic guidance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” adding, “we believe that the writings of Ellen G. White were inspired by the Holy Spirit and are Christ centered and Bible based.”

Delegates also state that they commit themselves “to prayerfully study the writings of Ellen G. White with hearts willing to follow [her] counsels and instructions,” adding, “we believe that the study of her writings brings us closer to God and His infallible Word—the Scriptures—providing us a transforming and faith-uplifting experience.”

In the final paragraph, delegates state that they rejoice for what has been accomplished through the circulation of her writings “in both printed and electronic formats.” It adds, “We encourage the continued development of both worldwide and local strategies to foster the circulation and study of her writings in as many languages as possible.”

The statement ends by saying, “The study of these writings is a powerful means to strengthen and prepare God’s people to face the challenges of these last days as we approach Christ’s soon return.”

THE VOTES

The positive votes came after a lively debate, which included,

among others, motions to refer back the Resolution on the Holy Bible, to table the motion on the Statement of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen G. White, and to reconsider the first referral.

Delegates who approached the microphones on the floor stated they did not have a problem with the documents themselves but with some specific phrases or words that, they thought, could be replaced or expressed better.

After an animated back-and-forth, delegates passed a motion

**“WE EXPRESS OUR
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to reconsider the referral on the Resolution on the Bible, and finally voted to approve it by 88.8 percent. After delegates approved to take the Statement of Confidence on the Writings of Ellen G. White back to the table, they approved the document by 84.9 percent. 🗳️



A DAY OF REJOICING

DIVISIONS OF THE ADVENTIST CHURCH SPENT ALL DAY REPORTING THE WONDERFUL WORKS OF GOD.

SHAWN BOONSTRA, ADVENTIST REVIEW

The points of order are finished. The lines at the microphones are gone. The screens no longer display endless lines of policy text, the obsolete portions stricken through. That which is to be referred back to the committee has already gone back. The leadership of the General Conference divisions has been affirmed.

The business of the church, in other words, has concluded.

On Friday morning, there was a

distinctly different flavor to the goings-on at the Dome. The technical business of the church was complete; it was now time to celebrate the *real* business of the church—mission. One can only imagine what might transpire if we could bring the pioneers of this global movement back from the dead for just a moment to witness what they could only dream about. Once upon a time, a handful of nineteenth-century visionaries gathered to speak excit-

edly about the fact that the remnant church had been born and its mission was to reach every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. On June 10, 2022, they would have been bowled over by what they heard.

It is telling that the reports from the church—13 divisions, plus attached missions and fields—took *all day* to deliver. Beginning with the North American Division, which reported shortly after morning worship, and ending with the Southern-Asia Pacific Division near the end of the day, the reports of God's people at work across the face of the entire globe were the only thing on Friday's agenda. Each division received only 15 minutes to report on seven years of breathtaking mis-

One can only wonder if John might not have seen some of the same faces we saw on Friday as he witnessed earth's closing scenes.

sionary activity, which meant there was a little adrenaline behind the pace of the good news being delivered to the auditorium.

It was a festival of sight and sound as delegates witnessed what John saw only in vision: God's final message of mercy going to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. One can only wonder if John might not have seen some of the same faces we saw on Friday as he witnessed earth's closing scenes.

It served as a powerful reminder that none of us is alone even though the work of preaching the three angels' messages can be incredibly lonely for those laboring in obscure fields or remote locations. We may all be laboring in relative isolation, connected only to a few local Adventists, but we are each firmly tethered to the Lamb on Zion, whose heart beats with increasing anticipation for the moment when the cries of the angels are finished and the kingdom can commence.

Each report revealed that the church continues to grow. Some divisions were able to report tens (even hundreds!) of thousands of baptisms; others reported *some*—and that *some* was like the widow's mites, in that they represented incredible sacrifice on the part of Adventists who are laboring in places where our work seems, to the outside eye, utterly impossible. And speaking of *impossible*, the reports finished with a deeply encouraging appearance from our brothers and sisters in the now war-torn Ukraine, where the work, incredibly, continues in spite



of rocket-damaged churches and lost church members.

In addition to the encouraging growth of the church, another persistent theme was the pandemic. Our worldwide church was united not only by mission but also by the challenge of continuing the work of Revelation 14 in the face of a global crisis that made traditional outreach methods all but impossible. The solution? Digital missionaries, usually young people. We saw the incredible Spirit-breathed ingenuity of God's people as they scrambled, in an endless variety of contexts, to figure out how God's work could triumph over a near-global lockdown. We did not baptize just between 2015 and 2020; the last two years have proved incredibly fruitful.

It is only right: the week began with a declaration of mission, reminding all of us that in the business in the hours ahead we would be handling holy things and that the

mission of the remnant church must be the lens through which we viewed every discussion, every decision, every policy. Then, when the business finally ended, we returned to that focus by celebrating what God has done through our meager efforts.

There are a lot of churches in this world but only one global movement that satisfactorily answers to the descriptions found in the three angels' messages. One must suppose that when John was isolated on Patmos, he was permitted a quick glimpse of this day in vision: the endless variety of colors, languages, accents, and cultures—some of which were completely unknown to the Mediterranean world of John's day—that gave robust testimony to the fact that God intended to keep His word after John was laid to rest.

Imagine the reports on the sea of glass; perhaps that's why it takes days to ascend to the kingdom when Jesus comes. ▀



JOSEF KISSINGER © AR

WHEN AN ISE IS ON THE MOVE

ELECTIONS PRODUCE NEW WORK ASSIGNMENTS, OFTEN FAR FROM HOME.

WILONA KARIMABADI

When Nominating Committee at the General Conference (GC) Session makes a selection for a new appointment and that person suddenly has a new job in a new country, it can be a lot to take in. As we've walked around the Dome in St. Louis, it hasn't been hard to spot certain faces revealing many emotions—the shock, the appreciation, the sense of being greatly overwhelmed.

While these church leaders find themselves on a trajectory to a new place and ministry challenge and may be glad of it, a new appointment often heralds times of great transition. And the transition—which can be difficult—is one that Seventh-day Adventist missionaries have made for more than 100 years. Such is the sacrifice of the missionary.

To be clear, missionaries, or international service employees (ISEs), as they are more commonly known now, are classified as such as long as they cross division boundaries. So even if those newly appointed at GC Session never ap-

plied to serve as ISEs, technically the move to the new position makes them exactly that.

PRECIOUS SERVICE TO THE OVERWHELMED

Once the shock wears off, there is certainly a lot to take on board. So, at every GC Session, employees of the Human Resources Unit (HR), Office of General Counsel (OGC), and International Personnel Resources and Services (IPRS) are present to help those who are transitioning to get started on what can certainly be an arduous process. IPRS is managed by Secretariat and Treasury. "When leaders are elected to fill positions in the General Conference or divisions, GC Secretariat and Treasury play a key role through IPRS, providing support to these individuals if they come from a different division," German Lust (pronounced "Hairmann Loost") of GC Treasury says. "This support is provided through visa processing, financial support for the move, shipping of personal belongings, et cetera."

Once the new appointee has been elected at Session, they will usually receive an appointment to stop by HR and OGC, where the process gets started. "We have one person here, Rebecca Wilhelm, who talks to them and shares the process," Karen Porter, associate secretary and codirector of IPRS with Lust, says. "Wilhelm will get basic information and family details and any documents they may have with them—copies of passports, those kinds of things—so we can begin the process of transitioning them to their new location, whether at the GC in the United States or another country."

This is a service that undoubtedly helps a family with the difficult job of shifting their entire lives to a new place. "The sooner we get their information, documents, and details, the faster we can get them to their new location. That's why we start with them here and continue the process after they leave and we go back home," Porter adds.

From GC Session to the day when a newly elected leader arrives at their place of work can take a few months. According to Wilhelm, six months is a pretty standard average, though certainly not set in stone. Immigration policies for the countries involved determine a lot of the timeline.

In the case of a new employee to the GC building, "they . . . work with GCHR on their local employment. But they will continue to work with Secretariat on their annual leaves," Porter says. "But for any allowances or ISE policies that apply to them, they work with IPRS." ■

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JESUS IS COMING . . .

Because He said so!





WILLIAM J. LEE

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE
PRESENTED FRIDAY
MORNING, JUNE 10, 2022

One of the joys of parenting small children is that they typically take their parents at their word. When my children were young, they trusted whatever I said without question. If I said I would return home at a certain time, they awaited my return with eager expectation. If I said I was going to bring them back a special treat, they believed me and looked forward to my return with anticipation! When my children were younger, they simply took Daddy at his word! They had faith in their father.

I want to remind us that we can have faith in our heavenly Father. We need to take God at His word the same way my children took me at my word. The apostle Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 1:20: “For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.”

Jesus is coming, because He said so!

JESUS IS COMING QUICKLY

In Revelation 22:12-14 Jesus says, “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.”

My friends, Jesus declares that He is coming quickly! In fact, John keeps repeating this phrase through the book of Revelation. “Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown” (Rev. 3:11); “Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book” (Rev. 22:7); “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work” (verse 12).

As Revelation closes, the very last two verses in the Bible say, “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen” (verses 20, 21).

Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. Fear, terrorism, war, economic uncertainty, and the lingering results of a worldwide pandemic continue to rank among the top of our concerns today. Every time we turn on the television, listen to the radio, pick up a paper, or log on to the Internet, we are constantly reminded that our current world will not last forever!

In Luke 21:28 Jesus says, “Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

Beloved, now is *not* the time to give up on God or become discouraged. Now is *not* the time to fall by the wayside or become pessimistic in our eschatology. Now is *not* the time to argue and fight with one another. This is the time Jesus said we should “look up and lift up [our] heads, because [our] redemption draws near.” Now is the time to live for Jesus. Now is the time to witness for our Lord and Saviour, Jesus. Now is the time to get involved.

Beloved, we know Jesus is coming. We can trust our heavenly Father because He said so.

THE PREPARATORY TIME

Considering the nearness of Christ’s return, how then should we live? What must we do? What must Jesus do in us and through us?

When the Spirit of God controls us, He gives us power, victory, and strength.

1 Living right In John 17:11, 21, as Jesus was headed to the cross, His prayer for the disciples and the church was: “Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.” “. . . that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”

Ellen White writes, “We are coming to a time when, more than ever before, we shall need to press together, to labor unitedly. In union there is strength. In discord and disunion there is only weakness. . . . In our separation from one another we are separated from Christ. . . . Oh, how many times, when I have seemed to be in the presence of God and holy angels, I have heard the angel voice saying, ‘Press together, press together, press together. Do not let Satan cast his hellish shadow between brethren. Press together; in unity there is strength.’”¹ May we as the Seventh-day Adventist Church press together in unity.

2 Doing right John 12:32 says, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” Our job as God’s people is to lift Him up! Lift up the cross of Calvary. Lift up His righteousness! Lift up His power! Lift up His grace! Lift the Savior up. Our mission as Seventh-day Adventists is to share Jesus Christ now.

Isaiah 43:10-12 declares, “ ‘You are My witnesses,’ says the Lord, ‘and My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides Me there is no savior. I have declared and saved, I have proclaimed, and there was no foreign god among you; therefore you are My witnesses,’ says the Lord, ‘that I am God.’ ”

Go and tell someone about the love of God! Tell of God’s mercy. Tell of God’s love. Tell of God’s goodness. Tell of God’s forgiveness and grace. Go and tell someone about the Sabbath. Go tell some-

one about the state of the dead. Go tell someone about the sanctuary message. Go tell someone about the second coming of Jesus Christ. We have a life-saving message to give to the world.

3 Letting Jesus work In Revelation 22:12-14 Jesus tells us that He is coming quickly and is bringing His reward with Him; 2022 General Conference delegates, we need the infilling of the Holy Spirit! We are in desperate need of continual revival and reformation. In *The Ministry of Healing* we read, “The world needs today what it needed nineteen hundred years ago—a revelation of Christ.”² We need to be consumed with the Holy Spirit. “This promised blessing, if claimed by faith, would bring all other blessings in its train. . . . The power of God awaits their demand and reception.”³

As we work and wait for our Master’s return, let me challenge you to pray [the message of these two texts] each day for the rest of your life: (1) “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5); (2) “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:13).

Please ask God for “godly wisdom” each day. Ask Him for the infilling and outpouring of His Spirit in your life, His church, and our world. When the Spirit of God controls us, He gives us power, victory, and strength. We will be His witnesses; we will lift Jesus up; we will share Jesus now. We will be God’s remnant people who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

My friends, Jesus is coming because He said so! Let’s be ready. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! Amen. 🗡

¹Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958, 1980), book 2, p. 374.

²Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub Assn., 1905), p. 143.

³Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1923), pp. 174, 175.

William J. Lee, Sr., is the senior pastor of First Seventh-day Adventist Church in Huntsville, Alabama, United States.



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100 cows as a sustainability project, new kitchen, three water towers, bio gas project, vehicle to transport students, and paint for existing buildings.

ANCHOR, ZAMBIA

Land purchase for expansion of sustainability projects, missionary house, 100 mattresses for new boys' dormitory, construction of the Child Impact girls' dormitory with water tanks, toilets, and showers.

RIVERSIDE FARM, ZAMBIA

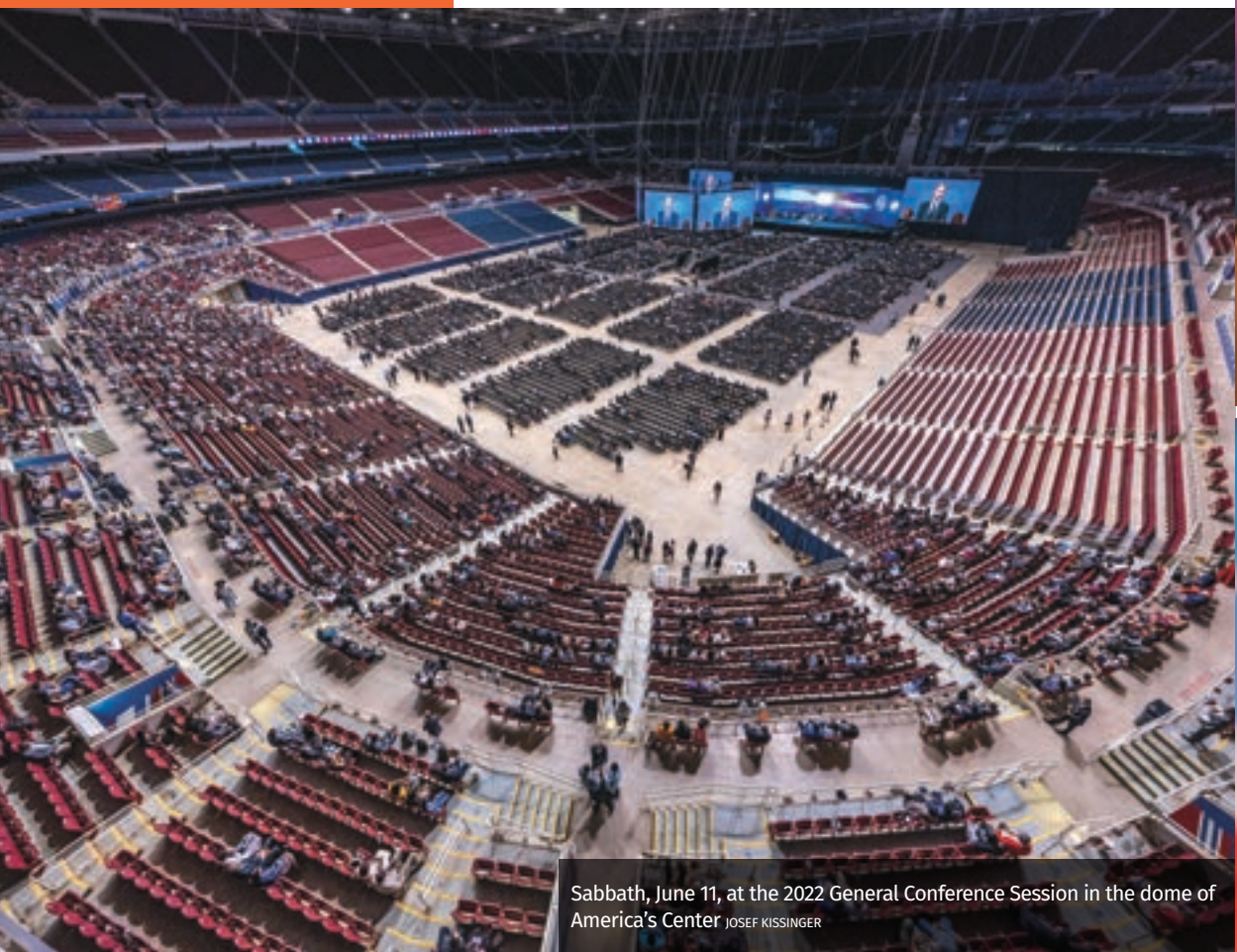
Bus for transporting children from neighboring villages, five classrooms to eventually expand the capacity of the primary school by 360 students.



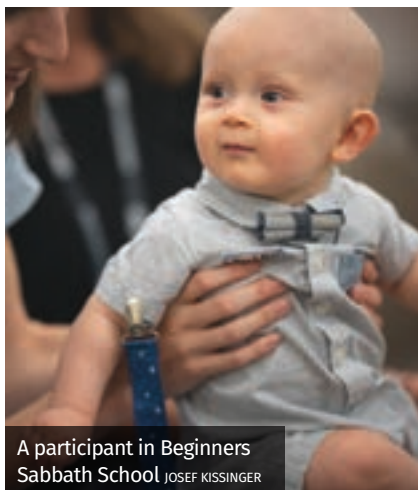
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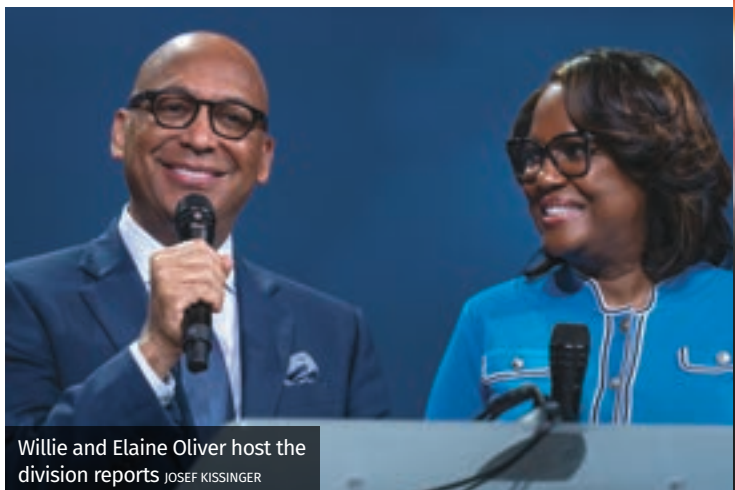
SESSION GALLERY



Sabbath, June 11, at the 2022 General Conference Session in the dome of America's Center JOSEF KISSINGER



A participant in Beginners Sabbath School JOSEF KISSINGER



Willie and Elaine Oliver host the division reports JOSEF KISSINGER



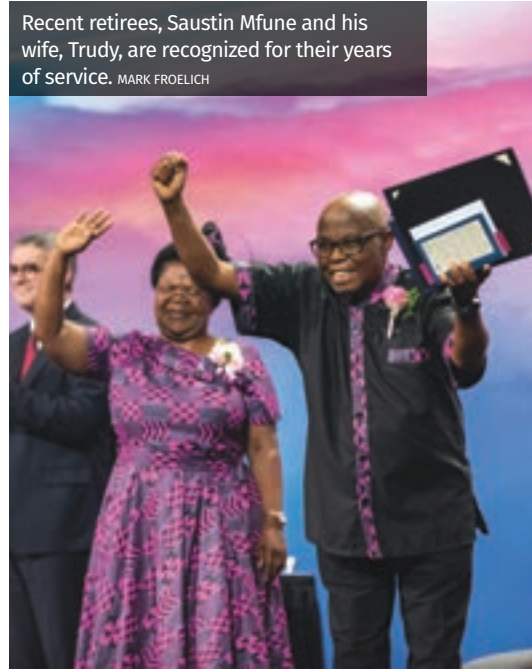
Alessandra Sorace sings for Mission on the Move. MARK FROELICH



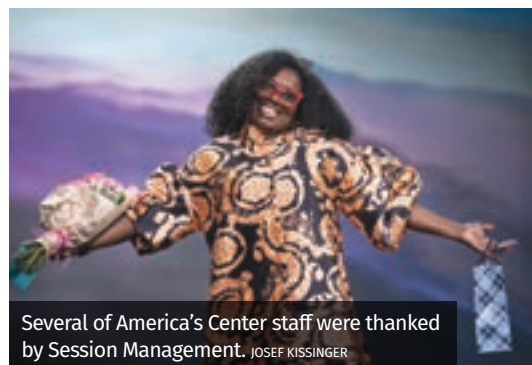
JOSEF KISSINGER



Division reports on Friday, June 10, featured colorful native dress and flags. MARK FROELICH



Recent retirees, Saustin Mfune and his wife, Trudy, are recognized for their years of service. MARK FROELICH



Several of America's Center staff were thanked by Session Management. JOSEF KISSINGER



WE SPEAK MANY LANGUAGES

*You don't need to speak
English to be heard.*

Sitting in the dining hall of the General Conference (GC) Session in the St. Louis convention center offers a great introduction to the many languages and dialects spoken by Adventists. You can hear Kiswahili float by, or Akan spoken by people hailing from Ghana. Portuguese echoes through the hallways. Spanish, French, Korean, Chinese, Tagalog, Visayan, and dozens of other languages can be heard among the delegates, reminding us that this is a large global family. I speak German to some of my friends from Europe and enjoy great memories with former students from South America in Spanish.

The tapestry of distinct sounds and syllables reminds us that we are blessed with a large spiritual family of brothers and sisters whose languages we often don't speak but who are as eager as we are to walk toward the kingdom. We may not always understand all they say—but we surely see them and embrace them, for they are family. We can hear their hearts.

Language can unite us—or it can divide us. In the past we have mostly gathered around the English language. This has historical reasons—this faith community began its journey in North America—but we are *not* a North American church. We are a global family and thrive on the blessings of diversity. We huddle around English because it's the language of a global world, but we have consciously begun to listen to all voices expressing their ideas and their worries in many languages.

WORLD VOICES

That's the reason the Adventist Review Ministries team included in this GC Session a significant number of international authors whose sole responsibility is to write daily commentaries and reflections in their native language. We called them *World Voices*. We invited these authors because they are trusted and respected voices in their communities and understand the power of words. They also understand the culture of their countries of origin so much better than we do. That's why we wanted them to share their view of this GC Session with

you—unfiltered and as real and significant as the dozens of articles in English you can find in our printed daily *Bulletins* or the extensive online-only written material and the audio and video reports.

If you can read Russian, Korean, German, Spanish, French, or Portuguese, we invite you to go to our website and relive this past week through their eyes. Meet Diogo Cavalcanti from Brazil, writing in Portuguese, or Ivan Riapolov from the Euro-Asia Division communicating in Russian. Become a friend of Daniel Bosqued from Spain or Marcos Blanco hailing from Argentina as they share their experiences in Spanish. If you feel at home in Korean, you will enjoy the writing of Jae Man Park and Hyo Jun Han. If you prefer German, let me introduce you to Matthias Müller. If French is the best way to reach your heart, you will enjoy the column by Pedro Torres from the Franco-Belgian Union.

We would have loved to add more languages, but budgets are limited. Whatever language you feel at home in, please know that we seek to speak many languages at Adventist Review Ministries. Whether it is *Adventist World* or digital content on Adventist Review TV or a GC Session, we see you and want to make every effort to communicate with you. You don't need to speak English to be heard. 📣

Gerald A. Klingbeil is an associate editor of Adventist Review Ministries.

	 FRENCH	
	PEDRO TORRES COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, FRANCO- BELGIAN UNION	Scan this QR code to read French articles.

	 GERMAN	
	MATTHIAS MÜLLER FORMER PRESIDENT, HOPE MEDIA EUROPE, GERMANY	Scan this QR code to read German articles.

	 KOREAN	
	JAE-MAN PARK SENIOR EDITOR, KOREAN PUBLISHING HOUSE, SOUTH KOREA	
	HYO-JUN KIM EDITOR KOREAN WORLD MAGAZINE AND <i>ADVENTIST WORLD</i> , KOREAN PUBLISHING HOUSE, SOUTH KOREA	
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	DIOGO CAVALCANTI EDITORIAL COORDINATOR, BRAZIL ADVENTIST PUBLISHING HOUSE	Scan this QR code to read Portuguese articles.

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	IVAN RIAPOLOV DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, EURO-ASIA DIVISION	Scan this QR code to read Russian articles.

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GLOBAL MISSION
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REMEMBERING MIMI SCHARFFENBERG

St. Louis native was instrumental in founding Sahmyook University.



JAE-MAN PARK,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, KOREAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

Sahmyook University has been built on the dedication of missionaries from the United States since its beginnings in 1906. One of the cofounders of the university was Mimi Scharffenberg (1883–1919), who was born in St. Louis and came to Korea in 1907 as one of the first single female missionaries.

God acted providentially when He brought Scharffenberg to Korea. One night she had a dream in which a group of people in white clothes asked her to come to help them. The very next day she received a letter from the General Conference asking her to go to Korea as a missionary. She didn't know anything about Korea. Scharffenberg looked up anything she could find about Korea in the public library and found that some people featured in a book looked like the figures she had seen in her dream. She felt convicted that God was calling her to go to Korea—and she obeyed.

Scharffenberg played a key role in establishing Sahmyook University and also began to educate women at the institution. She worked as the first editor of the Korean magazine *Signs of the Times* and served as the first director of the Sabbath School and Education departments. Scharffenberg also translated Ellen White's *Patriarchs and Prophets* and several volumes on Daniel and Revelation. In 1918, she became gravely ill and returned to the United States. She died the following year. Her consummate missionary spirit and outstanding contribution to the education of Korean women will be remembered forever.

Sahmyook University celebrates its 116th anniversary this year and currently has more than 6,500 students studying 24 different majors. The university boasts 10 churches on campus and sends out more than 10 global missionaries every year. Sahmyook University has 45,000 alumni, with 6,700 having been theology majors. They serve as pastors, evangelists, cross-cultural missionaries, and medical missionaries. Sahmyook University receives about 400 international students every year, with about 80 of them being Seventh-day Adventists. These young Adventists will be future church leaders in their countries when they complete their studies. The university has become a hub of training missionaries—locally, regionally, and also globally. The institution received the gift of the gospel from missionaries, and now it shares that gift with others around the world.

Korean Union Conference and Sahmyook University were blessed by missionaries serving sacrificially who were sent by the General Conference. As we hold the 61st General Conference Session in St. Louis, I remember Scharffenberg in the city of her birth. We have transitioned from being receivers of missionaries to a sending entity that supports God's mission to reach unreached territories and cities all around the world. I believe that's part of God's amazing grace. 🍀

TALKING WITH ISRAEL LEITO

Reflecting on current and past General Conference Sessions

SHAWN BOONSTRA



Israel Leito holds the distinction of being the longest-serving division president in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, having presided for more than 24 years. During his tenure, membership in the Inter-American Division grew from roughly 1.5 million to nearly 4 million. Shawn Boonstra sat with Leito during the General Conference (GC) Session in St. Louis as he reminisced about GC Sessions past.

SB: I understand you hold the distinction of having served as a division president longer than anyone else has. You've been to a lot of GC Sessions. When did you start going?

IL: [In] 1975. I went to my first GC Session in Vienna; it was the first time the GC held a Session outside of the U.S., and I was privileged to be a delegate to that Session.

What was your impression of that Session?

You can imagine, I did not sit in meetings all the time. The first impression I got was to see the church at work—to see how it functions—to see how we do things, and how we are together as a church. The church was not as diverse as it is today, even though it was all over the world. It was easier back then than

now. Today, we are so diverse, and we really need to choose our actions carefully to promote unity and not to facilitate division. I say that very carefully. Good things may be intended, but the results . . . we as a church will always stay together, definitely. But then, if you look at this Session—and I've been attending since 1975 and have seen, time and again—the acrimony becomes stronger and stronger.

Do you think that's a product of cultural friction?

I don't know if it is cultural friction. I believe the main issue that we face is hermeneutics, the way we interpret the Bible. You see the big discussion they are having now about the Spirit of Prophecy and the Bible—these sort of things that are creating, or strengthening, little things that drive us more apart. But you know, the beauty of it is, after this meeting, we write each other, we call each other . . . we are one. It's just that when we are together that we have this "trouble."

This General Conference Session is a little different from many of the others. What are your impressions of St. Louis 2022?

It is very compact. It is unlike any other Session we've had. We've had Sessions [in the past] where

during the day we had heated sessions, and during the night we celebrate. And now it is day and night of heated sessions.

And yet I am finding the debates are not as passionate as some years.

The debates on the floor, they may not be as passionate. One of the most acrimonious Sessions I attended was in Dallas. It was at that time that the GC decided to write its own rules of order. That became the main issue.

I wasn't there. They were using Robert's Rules?

Well, no. They were using Robert's Rules, they were using Canadian rules, they were using European rules . . . everybody would stand up [point to their rules] and say, "Listen! This is what it says!" And then someone else would point to their rules and say, "No! This is what it says" . . . at that time—I remember it clearly—the decision was made to write our own rules.

Do you think, as you've watched since then, that it was a useful move?

Absolutely. It has unified the church in the sense that when we come together, those of us who at least read the booklet know how to do things. We are free [at other levels of the church] to decide if we want to use it. We are still free; it is not forced on us. In the Inter-American Division, we decided that if the world church is going to use it, this is what we're going to use as well. So, this has at least taken away that thing where we fight over little rules.

One thing that is new at the last several Sessions is the fact that the meetings stream live over the Internet. When I first joined the church, I had to wait for someone to give me a VHS tape to find out what was happening in Utrecht. With live streaming, there are potentially a lot more church members watching, and I know that some of them think, *This is an awful lot of dry business*. What would your response to those people be? What should they be watching for?

They should be watching first—carefully—that our church is not a dictatorship. We are free to speak. People are not afraid to give their opinion when they are here together. And thus should the church function at the local church level as well.

The member in the conference and the union? They should have that openness to be able to have a vigorous debate and still remain friends—because this is how our church functions. I believe this is very helpful. If [people] could understand this and not see a discussion as animosity—enemies—it's just a difference of opinion, and we continue to be brothers and sisters.

You love church growth and evangelism. In your opinion, how does what happens here on the floor feed what happens in the field? Why is this important to the church member who works in the field?

It is so important that people in the pew or sitting under a tree can say, "This is the church that I love!" Whatever we do here, it must project that love for the church—and when I say *church*, I don't mean the GC building, or the IAD building, or the EUD building—no, I mean the church. From bottom up, or from top down . . . and I hate to say "top down," because it's always bottom up, because that's where the power is. If it can inspire the members, not just to say, "I'm so happy for what is happening in Inter-America, the third largest division in the world," but to say, "I'm so happy for what is happening in South Africa" and elsewhere, that is important. It brings the feeling of well-being, of success together as a church. For me? That's the main thing, and if it brings that in, it strengthens my spiritual belief. It strengthens my belief in the Bible, in the Spirit of Prophecy. And I say, "OK, so I'm not just my own little thing here in a corner. We are one church." That is so important. ♣



CHOOSE GOD'S WAY

Be a missionary!



CAMI OETMAN

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE
PRESENTED FRIDAY
EVENING, JUNE 10, 2022

I fell to my knees and prayed out loud to God for the whole universe to hear! I declared and committed that from that moment on, I was fully God's territory. Proclaiming my life to Him, I dedicated all that I was to be used for His purposes. I had spent the first half of my life all about me, and now the rest of my life would be all about Him.



HOW IT BEGAN

I started modeling in my early teens and had subsequently built a successful international e-commerce business catering to Hollywood socialites. Now, as I knelt in my father's barn, I cried out, "Lord, if You want me to preach in the backwoods of Missouri, I will do it. If You have something bigger in mind, I will do it. If *You* sell my company, then I will know that You want me in full-time evangelism."

Immediately my company sold. This was 2014, and God made it crystal clear that He was calling me into evangelism. It was only a few years ago that I could not pray out loud in front of my family, let alone stand before a congregation. With God's power, as a layperson, I went on to preach 350 sermons, including 10 full evangelistic series, during the next three years. God transformed me from the pursuit of the world to the pursuit of heaven.

There is unusual power in a personal testimony that blossoms into personal evangelism. I love the following promise of power and new spiritual life to every Christian who engages in soul-winning service:

"God can breathe new life into every soul that sincerely desires to serve Him, and can touch the lips with a live coal from off the altar, and cause them to become eloquent with His praise. Thousands of voices will be imbued with the power to speak forth the truths of God's Word. The stammering tongue will be loosed, and the timid will be made strong to bear courageous testimony to the truth. May the Lord help His people to cleanse the soul temple from every defilement, and to maintain such a close connection with Him that they may be partakers of the latter rain when it shall be poured out."¹

Through miraculous events I was introduced to the Adventist World Radio (AWR) president Duane McKey and his wife, Kathy, at the 2015 General Conference (GC) Session and was invited to preach with Total Member Involvement (TMI) in the Rwanda 2016 and Romania 2017 nationwide series. I felt so excited and honored to be a part of these unprecedented evangelistic events. Such incredible experiences happened when I stepped out in faith and trusted in God's power.

DON'T MISS AN OPPORTUNITY

In my mind, every time I approach the pulpit, I

claim Matthew 10:20: "For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you." In these moments we open ourselves up to heaven—to gift us the highest calling on this earth: to be used for, and by, the divine power of the one and only God. Friends, choose not to miss out on these opportunities! Not only will you be blessed on earth now, but a reward will also await you in heaven.

It is counted a privilege for every Christian to experience the blessings of the gospel working in leading souls to Christ. Nothing compares to seeing true joy in the eyes of a new believer! That is how I became hooked. Evangelism was in my blood. People's salvation—their eternal lives—remained at the forefront of my mind. People mattered to me more than anything.

I have been at the GC for more than five years now, serving as vice president for advancement at AWR. I have witnessed firsthand the power and magnitude of God's truth changing lives. There is no doubt in my mind that God has been with me and my video crew while we filmed in difficult places.

He was with us at the DMZ (demilitarized zone) border of North Korea, in the deadly "Red Zones" of Madagascar, and in the maximum-security prisons of Zambia. We have documented more than 100 testimonies from rebels, assassins, witches, mediums, drug lords, prostitutes, thieves, and many more who were "once unreachable" but now have accepted Jesus and the Adventist message. Our crew will do anything to capture a story of Jesus' transforming power anywhere in the world.

I will share a few of these amazing miracles with you. During the pandemic lockdown in the spring of 2020, our team had to regroup. We knew we had to continue to share the gospel even though all our mission plans to Papua New Guinea, Uganda, and Israel were canceled. This was not the time to sit back and relax on the sofa. No! This was a time to do something unprecedented: stand up in front of your sofa and preach the three angels' messages as if it were the last time on earth. Which is what I did.

Every single one of our team members jumped into critical roles to make this happen, and that was true TMI. On May 31, 2020, a 14-topic Bible series, titled *Unlocking Bible Prophecies*, launched from my living room. In true TMI fashion, the GC Communication Department joined our efforts, and God blessed our worldwide team as we

Nothing compares to seeing true joy in the eyes of a new believer!

worked tirelessly together. Truly man's extremity is God's opportunity—because the latest YouTube numbers now tally more than 15 million views!

People are coming to the Lord in droves. They are seeking answers for what's going on all around them, and only the Bible gives us behind-the-scenes insight and 100 percent truth. Friends, God wants to use you in the ultimate way—in a way that matters for eternity. God can use anyone, and I am living proof of that fact. All you need is a willing heart. I'm a layperson, but when I became on file for God, I prayed every morning, "God, give me someone to witness to today." And He did—every day! Shopping at the grocery store, waiting in line at the post office, riding with a taxi driver . . . with anyone, anywhere.

This world is amping up as we enter into the closing chapters of the great controversy between Christ and Satan—between good and evil. We are in earth's final moments. If the Holy Spirit is giving you that heart burn right now, steering you in a particular direction, prompting you to give up self—to *give of yourself*—do not ignore Him.

THE ULTIMATE PATH

Choose God's way. It is the ultimate path you can take on this earth, and it leads to eternal life. Do not be afraid to make a change—a huge change, if needed. It's time to sacrifice it all for Him. It is time to trade in your earthly treasures and time for heavenly treasures and eternity. May your legacy be all about Jesus. I love the quote from *The Desire of Ages* that states, "Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary."²

In November 2021 GC president Ted N. C. Wilson and Duane McKey participated in a Philippines-wide evangelistic series called Earth's Final Countdown. At their preaching site alone in Roxas, Mindoro, on a single Sabbath, more than 2,000 people were baptized, including 700 former rebel assassins.

These 700 fully reconciled former rebels pledged: "Each one, reach one." They have not only fulfilled this promise, but have already exceeded it! A phenomenal baptism occurred when the

former combatant generals for the military and the New People's Army (NPA) ended their 50 years of murderous war. Together they went down into the waters of baptism as enemies and came up as brothers rejoicing in Jesus. Amen!

By the time the meetings were over, 124,000 people had given their hearts to Jesus through baptism, joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This was one of the largest baptisms in the history of the Adventist Church. It was similar to the TMI event in Rwanda six years ago, during which more than 100,000 were baptized.

God is calling people from all walks of life where we least expect it. Recently, a group of imams—Muslim spiritual leaders—approached our Adventist leaders and expressed their desire to work with us. They said they've been studying the Bible and listening to AWR broadcasts. Yes, God's Spirit is preparing the way and seeking out those who are searching for biblical answers to tough questions.

As the world spins inexorably on its path to God's climactic finale, His people continue to share the last-day message with every nation, kindred, tongue, and people—and that includes Africa, Israel, Ukraine, and wherever God's children are waiting to receive Bible truth. What a time to be alive. Everywhere, God's Spirit is quietly tearing down barriers of prejudice and tradition and touching hearts. More and more, we will see things we have never seen before until we see Jesus coming again. What a day that will be.

We know God can turn any evil intent of Satan meant for harm into an opportunity for salvation. Jesus is inviting all to stand under His banner. Together let's pray to be the last generation to lift up Jesus to this dying world. As we give up "self," our heavenly Father will give us the courage we need to be magnets for Jesus. Jesus, forever victorious! 🗡️

¹ Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, July 20, 1886.

² Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 195.

Cami Oetman is the vice president for advancement for Adventist World Radio in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

THE CHANNEL, THE INSTRUMENT, AND THE SPIRIT

Stories of lives transformed keep reminding us that one size doesn't fit all.

MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

For me, as the son of a father who came into the Seventh-day Adventist Church through a radio program and a mother who was drawn to Bible truth by reading *The Great Controversy*, the June 10 evening program at the 2022 General Conference (GC) Session in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, had personal overtones. For every detractor, you can find a dozen life stories of transformed people who can trace their first contact to a message on the airwaves or the eye-opening lines of Ellen White's classic.

Those success stories are many, varied, often heartwarming, and a sign of what God will yet do worldwide. They are exhilarating and usually the most effective advertisement to anyone who feels driven to experience them by themselves.

POWER OF THE GOSPEL

The June 10 program included the story of hundreds of Communist rebels in the jungles of Mindoro in southern Philippines. After decades of bloodshed against government forces, they decided to put down their weapons and let the Bible transform them. It all started with an initiative of Adventist World Radio across the region. The rebels' change of heart touched some of the army commanders who had been fighting them. They also were drawn to the truth as it is in Jesus. Now both—former guerrilla fighters and those who used to fight them—are brothers and sisters in Christ. Talk about the power of the gospel!

There's the spellbinding story of the lone colporteur riding his bicycle across Australia in the 1890s. Philip Reekie sold a copy of *The Great Controversy* to a widower farmer and his family. "The story of my family is divided in two: before and after *The Great Controversy* arrived," Anthony Kent, GC associate secretary and a great-great-grandson of the original book buyer, says. That single copy, sold to a mourning widower eventually touched the lives of an estimated 20,000

people, including dozens of pastors, church workers, and committed lay members across Australia and beyond.

EMBRACED BY GOD'S LOVE

The channel chosen to reach out, however, is simply that—a channel—as the Holy Spirit accomplishes His work through their human helpers. And the crowning act comes as people of any race, culture, and background choose to commit to the Lord through biblically mandated baptism. On June 10, a four-candidate ceremony served as a reassuring reminder of it.

Biblical instruction is often preceded and surrounded by no-strings-attached acts of kindness. This was the case, we learned through a short video, of Nea Lili from Romania. One day, as he greeted a man in need and delivered a bag of groceries to him, the man told him, "Next time you come, you don't need to bring anything. After all, not even my children hug me the way you did!"

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

The proverbial coin, however, has two sides. Like an experienced fisherman, we often turn to where we know the schools of fish are. The massive bodies of water where fishing is forbidden or scarce do not always seem to draw an equivalent level of dedication.

Indeed, for all the copious conversion stories and massive accessions, there is a call to tackle an unfinished task. It includes the millions who have never heard of Jesus. But it also includes other millions who, having heard, have never passed beyond seeing Him as an obsolete cultural icon of esoteric significance.

Our God-mandated task is to keep sharing the good news on the airwaves and distributing life-giving printed or digital resources. It also mandates what we never stop reaching out to people who may never be drawn by either of the two.

Stories of lives transformed by God's power keep reminding us that one size does not fit all. 🐟



THE MOST IMPORTANT ROOM AT GC SESSION

The Prayer Room facilitates divine appointments and special connections with God.

MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

Not far from the buzz of the corridors populated by chatty delegates and their families and friends, a door leads to what is perhaps the most important room at the America’s Center Convention Complex in St. Louis, Missouri, United States. In the quietness of that room, people attending the 2022 General Conference (GC) Session can stop by anytime from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for as much time as they want, to reflect on God’s Word and pray. Known as the Prayer Room, it’s a fixture of General Conference Sessions and other church events around the world.

The idea is simple: to get together to praise the Lord, ask for forgiveness, and present personal or group requests, prayer ministries leaders say.

Outside, smiling volunteers from all around the world welcome those who come seeking the Lord. Inside, in the center of the room, Gem Castor coordinates dozens of others who, in a circle around him, kneel on pillows, talking to God with the certainty that He is listening. Phrases are usually short and simple.

“I praise you, God, because You are my friend,” one woman prays.

“Forgive us because we are asleep; wake us, Lord,” another adds.

“Help us to be closer to you at every moment,” an old man tells God.

“Father, teach us to pray,” a fourth implores.

In a corner, there is a Private Prayer section that a few people populate on their knees. Their eyes

are closed, and their soft words of supplication are barely heard just five feet away.

At the back hangs the Mission to the Cities Prayer Map. It invites every Adventist to pray for the more than 600 cities of the world with more than 1 million residents. Colored lines connect the cities, as in a subway map. Every person can take a fold-out copy of the map or print copies for local churches or schools.

The Prayer Room also includes a section that encourages visitors to pray for various people groups, including Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus. It also invites guests to pray for refugees and immigrants. It is led by Jobson Dornelles Santos, a Bible teacher at Brazilian Adventist University and founding manager of weppray.org. The app, launched at the GC Session in 2015, invites people to send their requests or pray for other people. Since its inception, it has received more than 44,000 requests for prayer.



“We come here to reflect on the Bible, to pray the Bible, asking God’s help that we may make it applicable to our lives.”



The e are moments for reflectio too, led alternately by various members of the Prayer Ministry staff. “Our problem is that we don’t spend enough time with God,” Castor tells the group. “We don’t agonize the way Jesus did. The moment we do, we are going to walk out of this convention with our faces shining.”

GC Prayer Ministries coordinator Melody Mason agrees. “We come here to reflect on the Bible, to pray the Bible, asking God’s help that we may make it applicable to our lives. We give God our praise, our confession, and our supplications,” she says. “It is a combination of praying and getting in the Word and also trying to model to people what they can take to their own churches.”

In the center of the room, Castor continues sharing with those present. He explains that some people tell him they don’t have the talent to pray. “But prayer is not a talent,” he emphasizes. “It’s a desperate call upon God. Indeed, even the call to go and preach the gospel will not be fulfilled if we don’t first spend time with God in prayer. But if we do, we will become unstoppable.”

“HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE”

2022 General Conference Session

Abridged version of GC president's Sabbath sermon—June 11, 2022

TED N. C. WILSON



Around this globe, Seventh-day Adventists have the great expectation that “Jesus is coming soon!” What a wonderful spirit of spiritual dedication and evangelistic enthusiasm in our worldwide family. With so many countries and cultures in our global church family, we praise God that there is one culture of Christ that binds us together and makes us all citizens of heaven.

“Jesus Is Coming Soon!” and the Bible tells us, “Hold fast what you have!” Let’s never give up the pure Bible truth as we see the signs of the Second Coming increasing all around us. Many signs point to the end of time and the imperative need to “hold fast what we have”—never give up the pure Bible truth. The Holy Scriptures say: “Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown” (Rev. 3:11).

Despite the swirling chaos all around us, we can plant our feet directly on and believe completely in the unchanging Holy Word of God—the Bible! Satan has attacked God’s Word down through the ages since his defection from heaven, but God has always protected His Holy Word and always will. He asks us to stand up for the truth and hold fast what we have believed. Seventh-day Adventists

accept the Bible as it reads and as the foundation for all our religious beliefs. From the Holy Word, we understand Seventh-day Adventists to be God’s called remnant church with prophetic identity—it’s a unique movement with a unique message on a unique heavenly mission.

As God’s remnant people identified in Revelation 12:17 as those “who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ,” we have a special message of warning, grace, and hope. “Seventh-day Adventists have been chosen by God as a peculiar people, separate from the world. . . . He has made them His representatives and has called them to be ambassadors for Him in the last work of salvation.”¹

Regardless of the many obstacles we face, let’s hold fast our belief in God’s Word and His love for His church. His church will not fail. It will go through to the end under the power of the Holy Spirit. In these last days of earth’s history and in response to our earnest prayers, God will pour out His Spirit on all who humble themselves and conform their lives to His will as expressed in His Holy Word and His instructions in the Spirit of Prophecy, showing His infinite love for the human race.



JOSEF KISSINGER © AR

FOCUSED ON GOD'S TRUTH

Let's review the many vital truths from God's Word that He would have us hold fast (see sidebar).

My brothers and sisters, stand firm for God's amazing biblical truth for this time. Do not be distracted, but rather focus fully on God's Word and Spirit of Prophecy counsel giving us connection to God, hope for the future, and our reason for being Seventh-day Adventists.

Let's focus on our specific calling by God as His remnant church for these last days of earth's history—to proclaim worldwide the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 and the corresponding fourth angel of Revelation 18.

Allow the Holy Spirit to spiritually revitalize your life, your family, your activities, your work for the Lord, and your local church. Let's earnestly pray for the falling of the latter rain of the Holy Spirit to accomplish this work in our lives.

We are told: "In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the Word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn

import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention."²

Since these messages are so central to our mission as Seventh-day Adventists, let's review some of the vitally important points of these messages, reminding ourselves as to what our God-given mission really is.

We read in Revelation 14:6: "Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue and people." The core of the three angels' messages is the justifying and sanctifying righteousness of Jesus Christ. As Christ's followers, we proclaim Him because we're connected to Him and His righteousness.

According to verse 7 this first angel's voice is loud so everyone will hear and give glory and praise to God, and the angel indicates "the hour of His judgment has come." We are to worship Him who made heaven and earth and the sea, which ties into the third angel's message signifying that God is the all-powerful Creator. We are to worship Him on the seventh-day Sabbath, which is a distinct sign of His authority. The time will come to make the ultimate decision of whom to worship by indicating where our loyalties lie—with God, by worshipping on His holy, seventh-day Sabbath, regardless of the consequences; or by following the beast, who has set up his false day of worship on Sunday. It is at that time that those who choose to keep Sunday will receive the mark of the beast.³

The second angel in Revelation 14:8 states: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." This is the church down through the Middle Ages that continues today, led by the papacy. It will, according to Bible prophecy, unite with apostate Protestantism and spiritualism to form the triumvirate powers attempting to force submission from all who faithfully follow the Word of God.

Babylon, a symbol of complete confusion, chaos, and the mixing of truth and error, is fallen because it represents the devil and satanic influences confusing people.⁴ We are told that "through

One day very soon, we will look up in the eastern sky and see a small cloud approaching.

the two great errors, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions.”⁵

Continuing on we read, “The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power, and under the influence of this threefold union, this country,” referring to the United States, “will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience.”⁶ This is not a conditional prophecy; it confirms Revelation 13 and 14.

The third angel follows, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or in his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name” (Rev. 14:9-11).

Receiving this mark in the forehead represents a conscious acceptance and belief of the beast’s instructions. Receiving the mark in the hand represents that even if you may not believe the instructions, you will sacrifice your eternal life simply to temporarily save your current physical life.⁷

Brothers and sisters, lean on Christ, His Holy Word, and His Spirit of Prophecy as we prepare for what is soon to come. Let’s remember that the three angels’ messages end with marvelous verse 12: “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” By God’s grace and power, let’s keep all the commandments of God and have complete faith in Jesus.

As the three angels’ messages are proclaimed, the Holy Spirit will guide us to be unified. “His transforming grace upon human hearts will lead to unity that has not yet been realized, for all who are assimilated to Christ will be in harmony with one another.


The Holy Spirit will create unity. . . . I am instructed to say to Seventh-day Adventists the world over, God has called us as a people to be a peculiar treasure unto Himself. He has appointed that His church on earth shall stand perfectly united in the Spirit and counsel of the Lord of hosts to the end of time.”⁸

We are to share these precious three angels’ messages with heavenly kindness and Christian love. They not only have a strong warning but share great hope through the righteousness of Christ as revealed in the everlasting gospel.

FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS

As long as God’s people—individually and as a united body—keep their eyes fixed on Christ and don’t compromise their faith, they are safe. Jesus Christ is the True Leader of this church, and He is the only One who can guide us safely to our heavenly home as we look to Him alone each and every day.

One day very soon, we will look up in the eastern sky and see a small cloud approaching. We will realize it’s the second coming of Christ! That cloud will get brighter and brighter and larger and larger, all of heaven poured out for this climactic event—and in the middle of that cloud, we will see Jesus. We will say, “This is the God that we have waited for, and He will save us.” Jesus will look down and say, “Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into the joy of your Lord,” and we will ascend to heaven together.

Today, Jesus asks you and me to “Go” for Him as we prepare the world to behold Him—our Saviour and King. What a day that will be when we shall behold Him! 

¹Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1902, 1948), vol. 7, p. 138.

²Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1909, 1948), vol. 9, p. 19.

³This is explained further in Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911, 1950), pp. 604, 605.

⁴See White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 588.

⁵White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 588.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷See Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1992), p. 224.

⁸Ellen G. White, *Principles for Christian Leaders* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2018), p. 306.

“HOLD FAST!”

1. The biblical truth that the Godhead is constituted by three divine and equal Persons who have existed and will exist from eternity to eternity.
2. Simplicity in Christian lifestyle, personal dress, conduct in church life, and everyday activities.
3. Biblical truths and their relevancy for today, despite persecution. Avoid issues that are distractions from God’s last-day three angels’ messages.
4. Your careful observance of the seventh-day Sabbath commemorating biblical Creation, accomplished by God recently in six literal days.
5. A simple, healthy lifestyle, including a plant-based diet according to biblical and Spirit of Prophecy counsel.
6. The unity in the church that God provides to all who focus their lives on Christ and His full biblical truth.
7. God’s biblical institution of marriage between one man and one woman. God’s Word confirms biblical marriage, biblical human sexuality, and the biblical family as instituted by God at Creation.
8. In humility to biblical respect for church authority, showing respect for God working in His church through appropriate bodies and careful observance of Bible and Spirit of Prophecy counsel.
9. Your great appreciation, use, and promotion of the Spirit of Prophecy—the writings of Ellen G. White. This is a heavenly gift to this church.
10. Biblical church-growth principles as revealed in the Spirit of Prophecy.
11. Your faithfulness to God’s unique Advent movement, resisting any compromise with ecumenism and neutralization of the pure Word of God.
12. The core of our salvation and the everlasting gospel—Christ’s justifying righteousness by faith and His sanctifying righteousness by the Holy Spirit working in us.
13. All the wonderful, Christ-centered 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, including our understanding of prophecy.
14. Your daily leaning on the Lord through personal Bible study and prayer. God’s Word will sustain you in all that you face.
15. Simple biblical church worship patterned after Revelation 4, giving glory only to God and not to human beings.
16. Proactive and wide-scale circulation of heaven-inspired Spirit of Prophecy books.
17. Your firm belief that Jesus is coming soon and that you are to get involved!
18. Biblical inspiration, rejecting humanism and popular social culture that attempt to destroy God’s revelation.
19. The beauty of the sanctuary and its services, which point to the everlasting gospel—Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain on the cross.
20. The biblical day/year principle of interpreting biblical prophecy, allowing the Bible to interpret itself.
21. The historical biblical/historical grammatical approach to interpreting Scripture, the only hermeneutical approach approved by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
22. The biblical and Spirit of Prophecy understanding that the shaking and sifting of God’s church will take place before Christ returns.
23. The precious understanding that we are God’s worldwide remnant Seventh-day Adventist Church in 200-plus countries supporting one another, avoiding the mission-destroying concept of congregationalism.
24. The wonderful foundation of God’s government based on love—His eternal law including His Ten Commandments.
25. God’s special plan of health reform and comprehensive health ministry as you advocate a healthy lifestyle of God’s eight natural remedies.



DELEGATE OF THE DAY PROFILE

“WE HAVE TO FOCUS ON HIM”

THE LONE AMERICAN SAMOA DELEGATE WEARS MANY MISSION HATS AT HOME.

WILONA KARIMABADI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

I am from American Samoa, a Pacific island more than 2,500 miles [4,000 km.] south of Hawaii,” Jessebeth Ropeti says. “I belong to the South Pacific Division, and it’s a pleasure to be the only Samoan delegate here at this year’s General Conference.” Ropeti was easy to spot in the Dome in the afternoon because of the beautiful white flower she wore in her hair, a gorgeous symbol of Pasifika.

“I came here to the General Conference accompanied by my mom,” she says. “I wanted to share the experience with someone in my family. [Mom’s] favorite speaker of all time is Mark Finley, so she was so blessed to see him when he gave the opening devotional for this year’s [Session].” Though Finley is also a favorite of Ropeti’s, she found her morning inspiration in Tuesday’s

message from Dwain Esmond. “That was a really powerful message, and I can’t wait to go home and share with my colleagues, my church, and the youth about the blessings I’ve received here so far,” she says.

Ropeti, a teacher and counselor for American Samoa’s only Adventist school—Iakina Adventist Academy—is passionate about her work as a youth leader. “I’ve been a youth leader for several years, though this year I’ve been moved to treasurer at our local church. I serve the Lord under a lot of hats back home,” she says. “I’m also an executive youth member for the South Pacific Division, and I am one of only a few youth reps we have from the Pacific.”

In American Samoa, personal ministry is a powerful method of spreading the gospel that has proved

to be very effective in evangelism. “We are trying to move toward more Bible study groups to increase the population of churches,” Ropeti says. “It’s our goal that by the end of this year we will have baptisms just through personal ministry and without an evangelistic series.”

When she thinks about what burdens her heart for the church she loves, division is at the top of the list. As many of us can attest, there are often issues big and small that threaten to fracture a movement that should be bonded by unity. “Pastor Wili, my mentor back home, always encouraged us to remember that there are small things that can blind our sight from what is coming. And if we fail to prepare ourselves, we will never be ready for when Jesus will come. We have to focus on Him.”

Ropeti is proud of the legacy of Adventism that is present in her close-knit family. “My mom was born into the church, and my father was baptized into the church as a young person,” she says. “I come from a family of girls, and we are all baptized members of the church serving the Lord in many capacities even at the mission level. It’s a blessing to work for the Lord even though many worldly things seem attractive to the eye.”

Here at the General Conference Session, she is reminded that working for the Lord has brought her face-to-face with what is one of the best parts of the experience. “What a joy to be surrounded by so many people, and you look around and can say, ‘Wow, they are all Adventists.’”

“The best gifts
for the Lord’s work
come from the
heart.”

—Tony Cash

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FOR YOUNG AND OLDER YOUNG

From the songs and stories in the Beginners classes right on up to inspired teaching from the White Estate’s Dwain Esmond in Youth, every detail had been covered. Areli Jacquez from Texas was in the Kindergarten class helping her mother, Norma (who led the program). That room featured several activity stations, and every few minutes, Norma would rotate groups to the next one. Why? “We are doing different stations on the theme of ‘Ants’ and how hard working they are, with the lesson of how God doesn’t want us to be lazy. And just like the ants are hard workers, these different stations touch on how God wants us to be hard workers too,” Areli says.

Parents were required to stay with their little ones for the duration of the class, and many parents of older kids gladly took the opportunity to hear awesome messages from Esmond in Youth and newly elected General Conference Youth director Busi Khumalo in the Juniors room. Incidentally, these “older kids” classes were without colorful chairs and cool props—such is the sacrifice of growing up.

While the little ones will likely not remember the rare treat it was to enjoy Sabbath School with children from all over the world, it was an experience their parents will never forget. “I love it because we have children from all over the world together, seeing how we can worship God together—no matter where you come from—and worshipping with songs they know and others they are learning. And they get to see many, many people!” Annie Schultz Begle, mother of three-year-old Alice, says. “I can’t wait for all the kids to be singing together in the choir along with the angels in heaven.”

We can’t either. 🍌

SABBATH SCHOOL SHOULD ALWAYS BE LIKE THIS

WILONA KARIMABADI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

It’s been a million years since I was a regular in kids’ Sabbath School, but many of the songs haven’t changed. So when I popped into the Beginners class during General Conference (GC) Session, it wasn’t long before I was humming the offering song (“Here is my money for Jesus . . .”) and, of course, the perennial favorite, “Jesus Loves Me.” As in Sabbath School classrooms around the world, there were tiny colorful chairs (brought specially from Maryland), minuscule tables, and props. Lots of props.

Weekends at a GC Session give any Adventist who wants it the opportunity to worship with thousands of fellow believers. Because Sabbath is the highlight, numbers swell on that special day as Adventists from all over who are not delegates or working at the Session take their chance to join the throngs in worship. And what would a Sabbath morning experience be unless it included programming for the entire family—from babies to centenarians? Thanks to the amazing efforts of the General Conference Children’s Ministries and Youth departments, young people were able to have a Sabbath experience like no other.



DEBBIE MICHEL, ADVENTIST REVIEW

The Sabbath-afternoon program at the General Conference Session offered a smorgasbord of reports painting a vibrant portrait of how church members around the globe are answering the call to go and spread the gospel in some of the darkest corners of the world.

Hosts Tiffany Brown, an intern with the office of Global Mission Urban Center, and Caleb Haakenson from Adventist Mission introduced the audience to stories of people who have already responded in such areas as youth ministry, health ministry, and media.

The two-hour program highlights included:

YOUTH DEPARTMENT

Adventurers (ages 4–9) and Pathfinders (ages 10–17) fully appreciate the assignment to go on God’s errands, delegates were told. Camporees around the world drew thousands of youths who expressed their love for Jesus in a myriad of ways. One ministry, called Mission Caleb in the South American Division, encourages youth and young adults to take vacation time to serve their communities and engage in evangelistic outreach.

MISSION TO THE CITIES

Paul Ogaga, a ministry leader with One Year in Mission, the church initiative that invites young adults to commit a year to mission, relayed a story from the Northern Nigeria Union that caught his attention. Initially the plan in one locale was to begin giving Bible studies, but organizers soon realized they had to first address the needs of the people. “We started doing repairs and in the evening do Bible studies,” Ogaga said. “It made friends and led to baptisms.”

In Tokyo, a partnership began in 2019 among the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, the Japan Union Conference, and the General Conference. A church-planting movement titled “Mission Unusual Tokyo” seeks to create new faith communities in a highly secularized urban environment. In one locale, a young woman who noted how friends came together to witness to her mother began studying the Bible and was connected with the Mission Unusual Tokyo team. The team offered her friendship and mentorship, and she was baptized after experiencing the genuine love of God.

HEALTH MINISTRIES

Loma Linda University Health president Richard Hart introduced alumni of the denomination's premier medical university who are serving in remote parts of the world. The group included James Fernando, medical director in Sierra Leone, and his wife, Rachel, who serves as a physician assistant; Denny Hong, a doctor in Kenya; Mel Bersaba, medical director in Sierra Leone; Wilson Thomas, who serves in Malawi; Andrew and Megan Trecartin, physicians in Chad; Jeffrey and Michelle Cho, formerly physicians in Haiti and now transitioning to Belize; and Staci Davenport, medical director in St. Lucia.

MEDIA

The Heroes Bible Challenge game created by the GC Communication Department was found online by a young man. He was given permission by the department to add unique sounds to each hero. He soon became interested in the stories even more than the technology. Choosing a "deeper dive" into the Bible, he eventually joined the Adventist Church.

HOPE CHANNEL

Young Cipriano had a near-death experience and was bedridden. His grandfather connected his TV, and he happened upon Hope Sabbath School. He said he could feel the Lord reaching out to him, and Hope Channel became his church. "I'm filled with thankfulness and love Jesus with my whole heart," he said.

ADRA

Michael Kruger, president of ADRA International, highlighted growth in the church's development and relief agency by noting that persons impacted by ADRA grew from 15.7 million in 2016 to more than 35 million in 2020. ADRA now enjoys one of the largest footprints of any church-affiliated development program.

"When Dorian struck the Bahamas in 2019, we couldn't get in," Kruger noted. "There were no flights; roads had been washed away. You know who was already there? The local Adventist church. In the first forty-eight hours, we were able to fund their efforts to supply people in need."

ADVENTIST VOLUNTEER SERVICES

GC associate secretary Elbert Kuhn interviewed Zach Kirstein, who spent the 2021-2022 school year serving as a student missionary at an orphanage in Bolivia. Kirstein, a student at Southern Adventist University, is the great-great-great-great-great grandson of J. N. Andrews, the first official missionary sent by the Adventist Church in 1874.

"I WILL GO" CYCLING TEAM

The audience erupted in applause as the "I Will Go" riders cycled into the dome, outfitted in the gear they wore on a trip of more than 1,200 miles (1,900 kilometers) from Washington, D.C., to St. Louis. Along the way they distributed more than 4,000 pieces of literature, including hundreds of copies of Ellen White's classic *The Great Controversy*, which first brought Adventism to the families of several of the team cyclists.

ADVENTIST EDUCATION

Adventist education is one of the most persistently successful aspects of the Adventist mission effort. Every year, thousands of students are baptized into the church, and thousands more family members find faith by attending school programs, religious services, and church activities. Nearly one million students around the globe learn about a loving God through Adventist education. A video highlighted how students from various backgrounds, including at mission schools like Arizona's Holbrook Indian School, find both high-quality education and faith in Adventist classrooms.

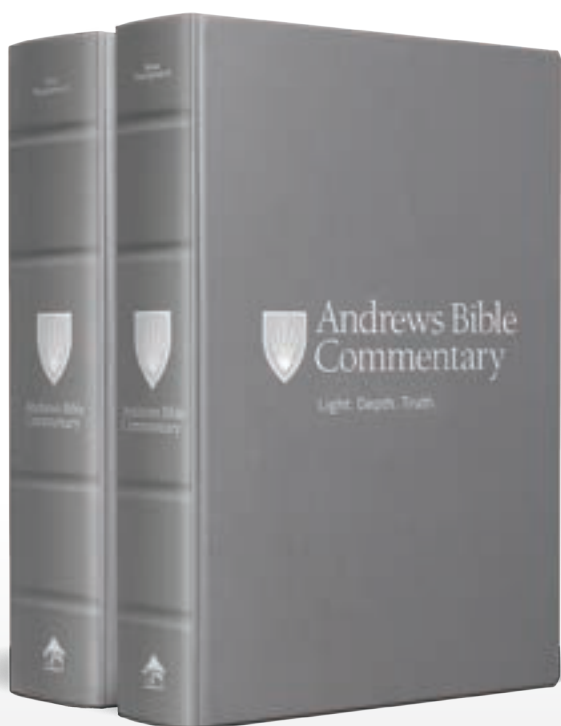
WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Women's ministries featured outreach to vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 pandemic, including sewing masks and donating clothing. Women around the globe launched initiatives to share meals, broadcast online workshops, and create radio programs, including sponsoring daily morning worship experiences on Google Hangouts. GC Women's Ministries director Heather-Dawn Small said, "Despite challenges, women are blessing others and making a difference in people's lives." 🌱



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NEW SABBATH SCHOOL CURRICULUM UNVEILED

SHAWN BOONSTRA, ADVENTIST REVIEW

Many things tie Seventh-day Adventists to each other all over the planet: our Christ-centered doctrines, our most-loved hymns, our history. But if there's one thing that *really* serves to illustrate our unity as a remnant church, it's what happens when the sun first sets on Friday at the International Date Line and continues setting across twenty-four time zones until it reaches its starting point again over the Pacific.

If there's one thing in particular that binds Adventists together during those hours, it's Sabbath school. Around the world, Adventists use the same curriculum to study the same biblical themes, and they donate to the same global mission projects. It brings a tangible sense of togetherness during the Sabbath hours.

During the June 11 Sabbath program, Nina Atcheson revealed a brand-new, childhood-long (infancy through age 18) curriculum designed to


carry Adventist young people through the entire sweep of salvation history, beginning in Genesis and ending with the earth made new, throughout the course of their Sabbath school careers. The new curriculum, *Alive in Jesus*, is slated for church-wide release in 2025, with some divisions already piloting it this coming January.

Rooted in God's instruction to Israel found in Deuteronomy 6, which requires believers to instruct their children faithfully, the new curriculum is built on three pillars: character, grace, and mission. Atcheson explained, "We're creating a new Sabbath school curriculum that uses the Bible but that has a clear and beautiful picture of God. We're developing eighteen years' worth of material that intentionally invites children to have a relationship with God that transfers into everyday life."

One of the major innovations in the new material is a curriculum for babies. "We're adding a brand new 'babies level,'" Atcheson announced. "We've never had a curriculum for young parents with babies before. But this will establish a simple routine for family worship [with] very easy-to-apply strategies, little tips for parenting with spiritual intention."

The online brochure designed to explain the purpose of the curriculum offers this description:

The *Alive in Jesus* curriculum introduces children and youth to Jesus by bringing the wonderful stories and lessons of the Bible (including a clear Seventh-day Adventist worldview and the 28 fundamental beliefs) into our twenty-first century lives. This curriculum shows young people that the truths of the Bible are unchanging and trustworthy, equipping them to study the Bible meaningfully for themselves in order to ultimately share the timeless truths of the Bible with others. A key goal of the *Alive in Jesus* curriculum is to nurture a biblical worldview in the minds of our young people so that they can see that the Bible is a lamp to their feet and a light to their path (see Ps. 119:105), and that it can be trusted to give solid guidance to all aspects of their lives.

More details are available at the project's website: sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/aliveinjesus.

SESSION

GALLERY | MISSION ON THE MOVE



MARK FROELICH



JOSEF KISSINGER



DAVID B. SHERWIN



JOSEF KISSINGER



JOSEF KISSINGER



JOSEF KISSINGER



JOSEF KISSINGER



JOSEF KISSINGER



SEVENTH BUSINESS MEETING

SESSION ACTIONS

61st General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, June 8, 2022, 9:15 a.m.

GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

VOTED, To divide the question on the motion, General Conference Executive Committee - Constitution and Bylaws, Sec. 1, into 2 parts (item 207).

GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

VOTED, To call for the vote on the item, General Conference Executive Committee - Constitution and Bylaws, Section 1 (first part).

GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment allows for removal from membership on the General Conference Executive Committee “for cause.”

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article XIII—General Conference Executive Committee, to read as follows:

ARTICLE XIII—GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sec. 1. a. During the intervals between sessions of the General - No change

b. The General Conference Executive Committee shall - No change

c. The General Conference Executive Committee shall have power to elect or remove, for cause, officers, directors, and associate directors of departments/associations/ services and committee members, and to fill for the current term any vacancies that may occur in its offices, boards, committees, or agents due to death, resignation, or other reasons. The phrase “for cause,” when used in connection with removal from an elected or appointed position, or from membership on the General Conference Executive Committee, shall include but not be limited to 1) incompetence; 2) persistent failure to cooperate with duly constituted authority in substantive matters and with relevant employment and denominational policies; 3) actions which may be the subject of discipline under the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*; 4) failure to maintain regular standing as a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. [See 202-22GSb]

d. The General Conference Executive Committee shall have - No change

e. The removal from office by the General Conference - No change

f. The General Conference Executive Committee shall have - No change

Sec. 2. a. A meeting of the General Conference Executive - No change

b. A meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 3. A majority of the full membership of the General Conference - No change

Sec. 4. Any fifteen members of the General Conference Executive [See 205-22Gc]

Sec. 5. All meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 6. Meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 7. Local conference/mission/field presidents shall be invited [See 205-22Gd]

Sec. 8. Notice as to time, place, and any other requirements under [See 205-22Ge]

GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

VOTED, To call for the vote on the item, General Conference Executive Committee - Constitution and Bylaws, Section 1 (second part).

GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment adds to the definition of “for cause,” in order to stay consistent with General Conference *Working Policy B* 45 20.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article XIII—General Conference Executive Committee, to read as follows:

ARTICLE XIII—GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sec. 1. a. During the intervals between sessions of the General - No change

b. The General Conference Executive Committee shall - No change

c. The General Conference Executive Committee shall have power to elect or remove, for cause, officers, directors, and associate directors of departments/associations/ services and committee members, and to fill for the current term any vacancies that may occur in its offices, boards, committees, or agents due to death, resignation, or other reasons. The phrase “for cause,” when used in connection with removal from an elected or appointed position, [see 205GSba] shall include but not be limited to 1) incompetence; 2) persistent failure to cooperate with duly constituted authority in substantive matters and with relevant employment and denominational policies; 3) actions which may be the subject of discipline under the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*; ~~or 4) failure to maintain regular standing as a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church;~~ 4) failure to maintain regular standing as a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; ~~5) theft or embezzlement; or 6) conviction of or guilty plea for a crime.~~

d. The General Conference Executive Committee shall have - No change

e. The removal from office by the General Conference - No change

f. The General Conference Executive Committee shall have - No change

Sec. 2. a. A meeting of the General Conference Executive - No change

b. A meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 3. A majority of the full membership of the General Conference - No change

Sec. 4. Any fifteen members of the General Conference Executive [See

205-22Gc]

Sec. 5. All meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 6. Meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 7. Local conference/mission/field presidents shall be invited [See 205-22Gd]

Sec. 8. Notice as to time, place, and any other requirements under [See 205-22Ge]

GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment adds the executive officers to the list of elected positions requiring a quorum of 40 members and uses the term “vice presidents” which encompasses both presidents of divisions and general vice presidents.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article XIII—General Conference Executive Committee, to read as follows:

ARTICLE XIII—GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sec. 1. a. During the intervals between sessions of the General - No change

b. The General Conference Executive Committee shall - No change

c. The General Conference Executive [See 205-22Ga and 205-22Gb]

d. The General Conference Executive Committee shall have - No change

e. The removal from office by the General Conference - No change

f. The General Conference Executive Committee shall have - No change

Sec. 2. a. A meeting of the General Conference Executive - No change

b. A meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 3. A majority of the full membership of the General Conference - No change

Sec. 4. Any fifteen members of the General Conference Executive Committee, including an officer of the General Conference, shall constitute a quorum of the Executive Committee for the disposition of routine items, and shall be empowered to transact business that is in harmony with the general plans outlined by the Executive Committee. A quorum of forty members is required for the disposition of non-routine items such as major financial decisions, the dismissal of elected and appointed employees, and the election of General Conference president, secretary, treasurer/chief financial officer, and vice presidents, presidents of divisions and of general vice presidents. All meetings require notice to members as per Sec. 8, Sec. 7, below.

Sec. 5. All meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 6. Meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 7. Local conference/mission/field presidents shall be invited to [See 205-22Gd]

Sec. 8. Notice as to time, place, and any other requirements under [See 205-22Ge]

GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

VOTED, To call for the vote on the item, General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Article XIII, General Conference Executive Committee (proposed new) Section 7.

GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment removes local conference/mission/field presidents from being invited to attend Annual Council meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee. The General Conference Executive Committee meetings are open for everyone to attend on-site and are generally livestreamed. Previously, such meetings were regularly held in the different world divisions once per quinquennium. At the present time, with the introduction of electronic meetings and due to budgetary constraints, meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee are mostly held at the General Conference headquarters. Local conference/mission/field presidents were invited to attend when meetings were held in their division territory. They were extended the privilege of participation in all discussions of the meeting, but without vote.

In a desire to treat all divisions equally, and with the ability to observe the meetings virtually, Art. XII Sec. 7. of the Constitution is being deleted.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article XIII—General Conference Executive Committee, to read as follows:

ARTICLE XIII—GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sec. 1. a. During the intervals between sessions of the General - No change

b. The General Conference Executive Committee shall - No change

c. The General Conference Executive [See 205-22Ga and 205-22Gb]

d. The General Conference Executive Committee shall have - No change

e. The removal from office by the General Conference - No change

f. The General Conference Executive Committee shall have - No change

Sec. 2. a. A meeting of the General Conference Executive - No change

b. A meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 3. A majority of the full membership of the General Conference - No change

Sec. 4. Any fifteen members of the General Conference Executive [See 205-22Gc]

Sec. 5. All meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 6. Meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

~~Sec. 7. Local conference/mission/field presidents shall be invited to attend Annual Council meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee when it is held within the territory of their division. Unless an executive session, which consists of members only, is called, such invitees shall be extended the privilege of participation in all discussions of the meeting, but without vote.~~

Sec. 8. Sec. 7. Notice as to time, place, and any other requirements [See 205-22Ge]

GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment amends the notification requirements for meetings of the Executive Committee called during a General Conference Session.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article XIII—General Conference Executive Committee, to read as follows:

ARTICLE XIII—GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sec. 1. a. During the intervals between sessions of the General - No change

b. The General Conference Executive Committee shall - No change

c. The General Conference Executive [See 205-22Ga and 205-22Gb]

d. The General Conference Executive Committee shall have - No change

e. The removal from office by the General Conference - No change

f. The General Conference Executive Committee shall have - No change

Sec. 2. a. A meeting of the General Conference Executive - No change

b. A meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 3. A majority of the full membership of the General Conference - No change

Sec. 4. Any fifteen members of the General Conference Executive [See 205-22Gc]

Sec. 5. All meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 6. Meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 7. Local conference/mission/field presidents shall be invited to [See 205-22Gd]

Sec. 8. Notice as to time, place, and any other requirements under these Bylaws of all General Conference Executive Committee meetings shall be provided to all members in a reasonable manner at least three (3) days prior to the meeting if the meeting is to take place by telephone electronic conference or similar communications, or at least fourteen (14) days if it is to take place in person, unless the meeting is held during a General Conference Session. If General Conference Executive Committee meetings are called during a General Conference Session, notice given during a business session shall constitute notice to all members, and all other notice requirements are waived. These notice requirements are waived in the case of a General Conference Executive Committee meeting convened during a General Conference Session since all General Conference Executive Committee members are expected to be in attendance at the Session.

GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment emphasizes the security of voting practices.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws,

Constitution Article V—General Conference Sessions, to read as follows:

ARTICLE V—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS

Sec. 1. The General Conference shall hold quinquennial sessions at [See 214-22Ga]

Sec. 2. The General Conference Executive Committee may call - No change

Sec. 3. At least one-third of the total delegates authorized hereinafter - No change

Sec. 4. Generally, regular or specially called General Conference Sessions are to be held in person and onsite. However, when requested by the General Conference Executive Committee, delegates may participate by means of an electronic conference or similar communications by which all persons participating can hear each other at the same time, and participation by such means shall constitute presence in person and attendance at such a meeting. Votes cast remotely shall have the same validity as if the delegates met and voted onsite.

Sec. 5. The election to any office enumerated in Article VI, Sec. 1. and all other voting shall be as defined by the *General Conference Rules of Order*. Voting electronically or by secret ballot must be in a manner that ensures the highest integrity, privacy, and confidentiality, as verified by General Conference Secretariat and General Conference Auditing Service, in consultation with the General Conference's legal counsel.

[Proposed new Sec. 6. See 214-22GSc.]

~~Sec. 5. Sec. 7.~~ The delegates to a General Conference Session shall be - No change

~~Sec. 6. Sec. 8.~~ Regular delegates shall represent the General Conference's - No change

~~Sec. 7. Sec. 9.~~ Regular delegates shall be allotted on the following - No change

~~Sec. 8. Sec. 10.~~ Delegates at large shall represent the General - No change

~~Sec. 9. Sec. 11.~~ Division administrations shall consult with unions to ensure - No change

~~Sec. 10. Sec. 12.~~ Credentials to sessions shall be issued by the - No change

~~Sec. 11. Sec. 13.~~ Calculations for all delegate allotments, as provided - No change

[Proposed new Sec. 14. See 214-22GSc.]

GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment accomplishes the following:

1. Provides an approval process for the minutes of the General Conference Session.

2. Defines the parliamentary authority of General Conference Sessions.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution Article V—General Conference Sessions, to read as follows:

ARTICLE V—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS

Sec. 1. The General Conference shall hold quinquennial sessions at [See 214-22Ga]

Sec. 2. The General Conference Executive Committee may call - No change

Sec. 3. At least one-third of the total delegates authorized hereinafter - No change

Sec. 4. Generally, regular or specially called General Conference Sessions are to be held in person and onsite. However, when requested by the General Conference Executive Committee, delegates may participate by means of an electronic conference or similar communications by which all persons participating can hear each other at the same time, and participation by such means shall constitute presence in person and attendance at such a meeting. Votes cast remotely shall have the same validity as if the delegates met and voted onsite.

[Proposed new Sec. 5. See 214-22GSb.]

Sec. 6. Minutes of the General Conference Session shall be approved at the first Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee following a regular or special session.

Sec. 5. Sec. 7. The delegates to a General Conference Session shall be - No change

Sec. 6. Sec. 8. Regular delegates shall represent the General Conference's - No change

Sec. 7. Sec. 9. Regular delegates shall be allotted on the following - No change

Sec. 8. Sec. 10. Delegates at large shall represent the General - No change

Sec. 9. Sec. 11. Division administrations shall consult with unions to ensure - No change

Sec. 10. Sec. 12. Credentials to sessions shall be issued by the - No change

Sec. 11. Sec. 13. Calculations for all delegate allotments, as provided - No change

Sec. 14. Parliamentary Authority: The parliamentary authority pertaining to all rules and procedures for General Conference Sessions not covered by its constitution and bylaws shall be based on the General Conference Rules of Order.

SESSION COMMITTEES - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment allows for Session committees to meet by electronic means.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws Article II—Session Committees, to read as follows:

ARTICLE II—SESSION COMMITTEES

Sec. 1. At each regular session of the General Conference, such - No change

Sec. 2. Session committees may convene by means of an electronic conference or similar communications by which all persons participating can hear each other at the same time.

Sec. 2. Sec. 3. Church Manual Committee: The chair of the Church Manual - No change

Sec. 3. Sec. 4. Constitution and Bylaws Committee: The chair of the - No change

Sec. 4. Sec. 5. Nominating Committee: a. The membership of the - No change

b. The members of the Nominating Committee - No changes

c. Each group (named in Sec. 4. b. 1) and 2) above) - No change

d. Those chosen as members of the Nominating Committee [See 215-22GSb]

e. Delegates holding elected positions under the - No change

f. No delegate shall nominate more than one person - No change

g. The Nominating Committee shall elect its own chair - No change

h. The Nominating Committee shall limit its nominations - No change

i. In order to expedite the work of the Nominating - No change

Sec. 5. Sec. 6. Steering Committee: The Steering Committee shall be - No change

Ella S Simmons, Chair
Karen J Porter, Secretary
Hensley M Mooroooven, Actions Editor
Joanne Stango, Recording Secretary

EIGHTH BUSINESS MEETING

SESSION ACTIONS

61st General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, June 8, 2022, 2:00 p.m.

GENERAL CONFERENCE CORPORATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

At 2:00 p.m., the General Conference Corporation Board of Directors meeting was convened, after which the business session of the General Conference Session was convened.

SESSION COMMITTEES - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment clarifies that only credentialed delegates may be members of the Session Nominating Committee and makes the language consistent with General Conference Constitution, Article V, Sec. 10.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws Article II—Session Committees, to read as follows:

ARTICLE II—SESSION COMMITTEES

Sec. 1. At each regular session of the General Conference, such - No change

Sec. 2. Church Manual Committee: The chair of the Church Manual - No change

Sec. 3. Constitution and Bylaws Committee: The chair of the - No change

Sec. 4. Nominating Committee: a. The membership of the - No change

b. The members of the Nominating Committee - No changes

c. Each group (named in Sec. 4. b. 1) and 2) above) - No change

d. Those chosen as members of the Nominating Committee must be duly credentialed delegates accredited delegates in attendance at the General Conference Session.

- e. Delegates holding elected positions under the - No change
 - f. No delegate shall nominate more than one person - No change
 - g. The Nominating Committee shall elect its own chair - No change
 - h. The Nominating Committee shall limit its nominations - No change
 - i. In order to expedite the work of the Nominating - No change
- Sec. 5. Steering Committee: The Steering Committee shall be - No change

DIRECTOR OF OFFICE OF ARCHIVES, STATISTICS, AND RESEARCH - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: In June 2011, the Office of Archives and Statistics became Archives, Statistics, and Research. This amendment is adding the research function to the description of this office.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws Article XII—Director of Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, to read as follows:

ARTICLE XII—DIRECTOR OF OFFICE OF ARCHIVES, STATISTICS, AND RESEARCH

At the first Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee following a regular session, the General Conference shall appoint a director of Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research whose duties shall be to administer the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research and the records management program of the world headquarters, to compile and report the statistics of the world work; Church, and to conduct research projects globally on behalf of General Conference administration, and who shall serve under the direction of the General Conference secretary and the General Conference Executive Committee.

APPOINTMENT - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS EDITORIAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This is an editorial amendment removing “Office” from Archives, Statistics, and Research.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution Article VII—Appointment, to read as follows:

ARTICLE VII—APPOINTMENT

The following shall be appointed at the first Annual Council of the Executive Committee following a regular session: a director of Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, a director and associate directors of the Biblical Research Institute, a director and research scientists of the Geoscience Research Institute, editors and associate editors for the principal denominational journals prepared at the General Conference, and any other non-departmental positions which have been established and filled by General Conference Executive Committee appointment. This Annual Council shall also appoint the membership of standing committees and various operating boards which have been established and filled by General Conference Executive Committee appointment.

USE OF “UNION MISSION” AND “LOCAL MISSION” - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS DIRECTIVE

RATIONALE: In areas where the word “mission” is a point of sensitivity which would inhibit the work of the Church, the word “section” may be substituted in the name of either a local field or a union. In such cases, it is understood that section carries the same meaning as mission and that in all cases where the Constitution and Bylaws refer

to a local mission or union mission, the same also applies to a local section or union section. Another English-language alternative for a local mission is “field.”

VOTED, To approve a directive to amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, where appropriate, by including “section” as a substitution for “mission” when referencing “union mission” or “local mission/field.” For example, “union mission” would become “union mission/section,” “local mission/field” would become “local mission/field/section,” and “conference/mission/field” would become “conference/mission/field/section.”

NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ELECTION PROCESS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate on the item, Nominating Committee and the Election Process - *Church Manual* Amendment.

USE OF “REELECT” - CHURCH MANUAL DIRECTIVE

RATIONALE: Since there is no “reelection” with the church, this directive removes this terminology.

VOTED, To approve a directive to amend the *Church Manual* where appropriate, by replacing “reelect” with “elect to a new term of office.”

DUTIES OF DEACONS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To call for the vote on the item, Duties of Deacons - *Church Manual* Amendment.

DUTIES OF DEACONS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment encourages deacons to assist members with special needs.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 79, Duties of Deacons, to read as follows:

Duties of Deacons—The work of deacons involves a wide range of services for the church, including:

1. Assistance at Services and Meetings—Deacons are usually - No change
2. Visitation of Members—In many churches churches, visitation is arranged by distributing membership by districts and assigning a deacon to each district with the expectation that he will visit each home at least once a quarter.

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

3. Preparation for Baptismal Services—Deacons make necessary - No change
4. Assistance at Communion Service—At the service of foot - No change
5. Care of the Sick and Aiding the Poor and Unfortunate—Deacons - No change
6. Care and Maintenance of Property—In churches where the responsibility for the care and maintenance of church property is not assigned to a building committee, deacons and deaconesses have this responsibility. (See Notes, #3, p. 173.) (See Notes, #4, pp. 173-174.)

DUTIES OF DEACONESSES - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment encourages deaconesses to visit members and to assist members with special needs.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church

Officers and Organizations, page 81, Duties of Deaconesses, to read as follows:

Duties of Deaconesses—Deaconesses serve the church in a wide variety of activities, including:

1. Greeting and Visiting Guests and Members—In many - No change

2. Visitation of Members—In many churches, visitation is arranged by distributing membership by districts and assigning a deaconess to each district with the expectation that she will visit each home at least once a quarter.

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

3. Assistance at Baptisms—Deaconesses ensure that female candidates - No change

4. Arrangements for the Communion Service—Deaconesses and - No change

5. The Care of the Sick and the Poor—Deaconesses assist deacons in - No change

6. Care and Maintenance of Property—In churches where the - No change

ORGANIZING A COMPANY - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: Since a company does not ordain deacons and deaconesses, this amendment provides guidance for these leadership positions.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 5, Organizing, Uniting, and Dissolving Churches and Companies, pages 37 and 38, Organizing a Company, to read as follows:

Organizing a Company

Where a number of isolated believers reside near one another or where they belong to a small group, house church, or church planting core group, they should consider forming a company of believers for fellowship, worship, and mission with the objective of growing into an organized church or multiplying house churches in that geographical area.

Company status is approved by vote of the conference committee, which, should it become necessary, may subsequently dissolve the company. The division and/or conference should have written guidelines for organizing companies within its territory.

Church members who are part of small groups or house groups may form the nucleus of a new company. Membership of all those who want to be part of a company should be held in either the conference church or a local church (mother church). If membership for those who want to be part of a company is to be held in the conference church, the conference committee will vote their membership transfers to the conference church and indicate that they are part of the new company.

When the conference committee approves establishment of a company, a leadership team should be appointed, including a leader, a clerk, and a treasurer. The appointment should be carried out by the district pastor, or other pastor appointed by the conference committee, in counsel with the group being established as a company.

All other company appointments should be made by vote of those who are part of the group that is forming the company. The district pastor or other person authorized by the conference committee shall

preside at such a meeting. Only members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in regular standing shall be appointed.

The leader of a company shall not be ordained to that office and does not have the authority to perform those functions that are vested in an elder of a church. However, where exceptional circumstances warrant, the conference committee may appoint a person of church experience and leadership ability to serve as elder of the company.

Since ordination does not take place in companies, deacons and deaconesses should not be elected, but men and women should be voted in the local congregation as “company assistants.” Their duties will be similar to those performed by the deacons and deaconesses of organized churches where activities do not require ordination. (See p. 79.)

The clerk of the company shall keep record of all activities and meetings of the company and shall send regular statistical reports to the mother church or the conference executive secretary. These reports should include statistics on attendance and activities of the company, including outreach ministries conducted during the week or on Sabbath.

The treasurer of the company shall keep record of all money received and disbursed and shall send promptly, at the time established by the conference, all tithes and offerings, other than funds collected for local purposes, to the conference treasurer, who also is treasurer of the conference church.

If the members of an organized company are members of the conference church, the company does not possess the right to administer discipline or transfer or receive members. All such matters must be referred to the conference committee, which constitutes the board of the conference church. The conference president is the elder of the conference church.

If the conference organizes a company through a neighboring mother church instead of through the conference church, the functions listed above (such as reporting and membership) would be cared for by/through the mother church.

Since a company should want to grow and eventually be recognized as a church, its leadership should prepare members for church status by promoting all activities generally carried on by a church.

SPIRIT OF PROPHECY WRITINGS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To call for the vote on the item, Spirit of Prophecy Writings - *Church Manual* Amendment.

SPIRIT OF PROPHECY WRITINGS - CHURCH MANUAL ADDITION

RATIONALE: This addition to the *Church Manual* emphasizes the importance of the Spirit of Prophecy and creates the position of a Spirit of Prophecy Writings Coordinator in the church.

VOTED, To add a new section, Spirit of Prophecy, to the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, following Personal Ministries, on page 102, to read as follows:

Spirit of Prophecy Writings

The Scriptures testify that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and we believe it was manifested in the ministry of

Ellen G. White. Her writings speak with prophetic authority and provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction to the Church. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Num. 12:6; 2 Chron. 20:20; Amos 3:7; Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 22:8, 9.)

Spirit of Prophecy Writings Coordinator—The church elects a Spirit of Prophecy writings coordinator with the responsibility of promoting the importance and right use of the Spirit of Prophecy writings, in collaboration with the publishing ministries coordinator.

YOUTH MINISTRIES - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate on the item, Youth Ministries - *Church Manual* Amendment.

NO WALL OF PARTITION (CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD) - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment adds a direct quotation from the referenced text.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 2, Church of the Living God, pages 20 and 21, No Wall of Partition, to read as follows:

No Wall of Partition

Christ sought by precept and example to teach the truth that with God there was to be no dividing wall between Israel and other nations (John 4:44; 10:16; Luke 9:51-56; Matt. 15:21-28). The apostle Paul writes, “The Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel” (Eph. 3:6).

Nor is there to be among Christ’s followers any preference of caste or nationality or race or color, for all are of one blood. The elect of God are a universal brotherhood, body, a new humanity, “all saved by the blood of Christ, which is available to all. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus”” (Gal. 3:28).

“Christ came to this earth with a message of mercy and forgiveness. He laid the foundation for a religion by which Jew and Gentile, black and white, free and bond, are linked together in one common brotherhood, recognized as equal in the sight of God. The Savior has a boundless love for every human being.”—7T 225.

“No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple, that every soul may have free access to God. . . . In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. All are brought nigh by His precious blood.”— COL 386.

MEMBERSHIP RECORD - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not refer the item, Membership Record - *Church Manual* Amendment, back to the *Church Manual* Committee.

MEMBERSHIP RECORD - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To call for the vote on the item, Membership Record -

Church Manual Amendment.

MEMBERSHIP RECORD - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment removes the confusing term, “retired membership list,” and clarifies that there should only be one membership record.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 6, Membership, page 55, Membership Record, to read as follows:

Membership Record—The church should have one current, regularly updated membership record. Names are added or removed only on the vote of the church, at death, or at the member’s request. (See pp. 81, 82.) church or at death. (See pp. 81, 82.) Under no circumstances should a church keep a retired membership list.

- Artur A Stele, Chair
- Claude J Richli, Secretary
- Hensley M Mooroven, Actions Editor
- Tamara K Boward, Recording Secretary

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #9

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

General Conference

Vice Presidents Assigned to Divisions:

- Harrington S Akombwa, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division
- Stanley E Arco, South American Division
- Mario A Brito, Inter-European Division
- G Alexander Bryant, North American Division
- Roger O Caderma, Southern Asia-Pacific Division
- Daniel Duda, Trans-European Division
- Elie Henry, Inter-American Division
- Mikhail F Kaminskiy, Euro-Asia Division*
- Yo Han Kim, Northern Asia-Pacific Division
- Ezras Lakra, Southern Asia Division
- Robert Osei-Bonsu, West-Central Africa Division
- Blasius M Ruguri, East-Central Africa Division
- Glenn C Townend, South Pacific Division

*Due to the unusual circumstances prevailing in the Euro-Asia Division, the Euro-Asia Division caucus, General Conference Session Nominating Committee, and the General Conference executive officers recommend to the General Conference Session to extend the term of office of the three Euro-Asia Division officers until the 2022 Annual Council.

NINTH BUSINESS MEETING

SESSION ACTIONS

61st General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, June 8, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

CHURCH BOARD CANNOT REMOVE MEMBERS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment simplifies the language of this section.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 7, Discipline, page 65, Church Board Cannot Remove Members, to read as follows:

Church Board Cannot Remove Members—The board may recom-

mend to a business meeting the removal of members, but under no circumstance does the board have the right to take final action, except to record removal at death or at the member’s request. (See pp. 55, 66, 81-82.) action. Except in the case of the death of members, the clerk can remove a name from the records only after a vote of the church in a business meeting.

ADVENTIST POSSIBILITY MINISTRIES - CHURCH MANUAL ADDITION

RATIONALE: This addition to the *Church Manual* emphasizes the

importance of including all church members in ministry.

VOTED, To add a new section, Adventist Possibility Ministries, to the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, following Departments and Other Organizations, on page 87, to read as follows:

Adventist Possibility Ministries

The Adventist Possibility Ministries initiative was established to extend the compassionate and inclusive ministry of Jesus and seeks to inspire, equip, and mobilize those with special needs and those who are deaf. These opportunities are defined as deafness, blindness, physical mobility limitations, and mental/social development. It also includes ministry for orphans and vulnerable children, widows and widowers, and caregivers. The goal is to foster understanding with the exploration of ministry possibilities for those with special needs and the Deaf.

All are in search of wholeness. All are gifted, needed, and treasured. All are created in the image of God with an inherent dignity regardless of any limitation they may have. This global initiative encompasses a ministry for those with special needs and the Deaf, along with seeking opportunities to minister *with* them. While some disadvantages may be present, greater emphasis is placed upon their possibilities. This educational mission of the Church strategically gives focus to three main values: *awareness* of needs; *acceptance* of the individuals who are deaf or who have special needs; and the development of specific *action* plans to be implemented to provide opportunities for these individuals to find purpose and fulfillment in life and ministry.

The following statement by Ellen G. White underscores the importance of this work, “I saw that it is in the providence of God that widows and orphans, the blind, the Deaf, the lame, and persons afflicted in a variety of ways, have been placed in close Christian relationship to His church; it is to prove His people and develop their true character. Angels of God are watching to see how we treat these persons who need our sympathy, love, and disinterested benevolence. This is God’s test of our character.”—3T 511.

The Deaf as a Unique Culture—The Deaf are internationally recognized as having their own set of social beliefs, behaviors, art, history, literary traditions, values, and languages just as other cultures. While they are often considered as having “special needs,” the Church recognizes their deafness as more of a cultural characteristic than of a disability.

Adventist Possibility Ministries Leader—It is recommended that the board appoint a local possibility ministries leader. While it is preferable for the leader to have direct experience or education with possibility ministries, it is not mandatory. It is best if the leadership for this ministry is chosen from within the groups they represent. While working together with other leaders, it is critical that planning be done by the groups themselves. This is done so they may serve God and community as expressed in the mission statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is imperative for the leader to be compassionate, and to serve with an approach that fosters empowerment and participation.

Adventist Possibility Ministries Committee—The church board should establish a committee for possibility ministries to encourage members with special needs and to learn how to effectively communicate with them. It should create witnessing programs, recommend how to make church facilities more accessible, help solve transportation programs, and recommend ways to assist in the discovery of roles or ministries that bring a sense of meaning and fulfillment. The committee is chaired by the possibility ministries leader(s). If not serving as the chairperson, the pastor should be an ex officio member.

Resources—For possibility ministries resources, see Notes #9, pp. 175.

Abner De los Santos, Chair
Elbert Kuhn, Secretary
Hensley M Mooroooven, Actions Editor
Joanne Stango, Recording Secretary

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #10

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

East-Central Africa Division

Secretary: Musa G Mitekaro
Treasurer: Jerome Habimana

Euro-Asia Division

Secretary: Viktor Alyeksyeyenko*
Treasurer: Vladimir I Tkachuk*

Inter-American Division

Secretary: Leonard A Johnson
Treasurer: Filiberto M Verduzzo Avila

Inter-European Division

Secretary: Barna Magyarosi
Treasurer: Norbert Zens

North American Division

Secretary: Kyoshin Ahn
Treasurer: C Randolph Robinson

Northern-Asia Pacific Division

Secretary: Hiroshi Yamaji
Treasurer: Joel D Tompkins

South American Division

Secretary: Edward Heidinger Zevallos
Treasurer: Marlon de Souza Lopes

South Pacific Division

Secretary: Michael B Sikuri
Treasurer: J Francois Keet

Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division

Secretary: Gideon Reyneke
Treasurer: Hopekings K Ngomba

Southern Asia Division

Secretary: Ch John Victor
Treasurer: Riches Christian

Southern Asia-Pacific Division

Secretary: Wendell W Mandolang
Treasurer: Jacinto Adap

Trans-European Division

Secretary: Robert C Cszimadia
Treasurer: Nenad Jeuranovic

West-Central Africa Division

Secretary: Selom Kwasi Sessou
Treasurer: Markus Musa Dangana

*Due to the unusual circumstances prevailing in the Euro-Asia Division, the Euro-Asia Division caucus, General Conference Session Nominating Committee, and the General Conference executive officers recommend to the General Conference Session to extend the term of office of the three Euro-Asia Division officers until the 2022 Annual Council.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #11

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

General Conference Communication

Associate Director:
Samuel H Neves

Education

Associate Directors:
Hudson E Kibuuka
Julian Melgosa
John Wesley Taylor V
Richard A Sabuin

Health Ministries

Associate Directors:
Zeno L Charles-Marcel
Katia Reinert

Torben Bergland

Ministerial Association

Associate Secretaries:

Pavel Goia
Jeffrey O Brown
Robert Costa
Anthony R Kent

Planned Giving and Trust Services

Associate Director:
Scot T Coppock

Public Affairs and Religious Liberty

Associate Directors:
Nelu Burcea
Jennifer G Woods

Publishing Ministries

Associate Director:

Stephen Apola

Sabbath School and Personal

Ministries

Associate Director:
Justin Kim

Stewardship Ministries

Associate Director:
Aniel Barbe

Women's Ministries

Associate Director:
Nilde Itin

Youth Ministries

Associate Directors:
Pako E Mokgwane
Andres J Peralta

TENTH BUSINESS MEETING

SESSION ACTIONS

61st General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, June 9, 2022, 8:00 a.m.

MINISTRY TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES - CHURCH MANUAL DELETION

RATIONALE: A new section on Adventist Possibility Ministries is being added resulting in this section being deleted.

VOTED, To delete from the *Church Manual* the section, Ministry to People with Disabilities, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 102, which reads as follows:

Ministry to People With Disabilities—This ministry functions under the personal ministries council and develops programs for members and others with disabilities. It should create witnessing programs, recommend how to make church facilities more accessible, help solve transportation problems, and recommend ways to involve members with disabilities. The coordinator of Ministry to People With Disabilities serves as a liaison with organizations providing services for people with disabilities, such as Christian Record Services, and promotes Christian Record Services programs.

MAKING DISCIPLES - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate on the item, Making Disciples - *Church Manual* Amendment.

DISCIPLESHIP (CHURCH BOARD AND ITS MEETINGS) - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate on the item, Discipleship (Church Board and Its Meetings) - *Church Manual* Amendment.

DISCIPLESHIP (CHURCH BOARD AND ITS MEETINGS) - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment makes the wording of this section consistent with the new mission statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as voted by the 2018 Annual Council.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Services and Other Meetings, page 130, Discipleship, to read as follows:

Making Disciples—The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, who live as His loving witnesses and proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel of the Three Angels' Messages in preparation for His soon return (Matt. 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, Rev. 14:6-12). The purpose of the Church as the body of Christ is to intentionally make disciples so that they continue in an active and fruitful relationship with Christ and His Church. Discipleship—The purpose of the Church as the body of Christ is to intentionally disciple members, so that they continue in an active and fruitful relationship with Christ and His Church.

Discipleship ~~Disciple-making~~ is based on an ongoing, lifelong relationship with Jesus. The believer commits to “abiding in Christ” (John 15:8), to being trained for fruitful discipleship by sharing Jesus with others, as well as to leading other members to also be faithful disciples.

The Church, individually and collectively, shares responsibility for ensuring that every church member remains part of the body of Christ.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE MEMBERS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate on the item, Fundamental Rights of the Members - *Church Manual* Amendment.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE MEMBERS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment clarifies that written notice should be given prior to both the church board meeting and church business meeting before voting to discipline a member.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 7, Discipline, page 65, Fundamental Rights of the Members, to read as follows:

Fundamental Rights of the Members—Members have a fundamental right to prior notification of the disciplinary meeting meetings

(see p. 128) and the right to be heard in their own defense, introduce evidence, and produce witnesses. No church should vote to discipline a member under circumstances that deprive the member of these rights. Written notice must be given at least two weeks before the meeting church board meeting and two weeks before the business meeting and include the reasons for the disciplinary hearing.

SABBATHKEEPING - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment adds a direct quotation from the referenced text.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 12, Standards of Christian Living, pages 144 and 145, Sabbathkeeping, to read as follows:

Sabbathkeeping

The Sabbath is a token of God's love to humanity. It is a memorial of God's power in the original creation and also a sign of His power to recreate and sanctify our lives (Eze. 20:12), and its observance is an evidence of our loyalty to Him and of our fellowship with Him.

The Sabbath holds a special place in our lives. The seventh day of the week, from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday (Lev. 23:32), is a gift from God, a sign of His grace in time. It is a privilege, a special appointment with the One who loves us and whom we love, a sacred time set aside by God's eternal law, a day of delight for worshipping God and sharing with others (Isa. 58:13). We welcome the Sabbath with joy and gratitude.

"The Sabbath—oh!—make it the sweetest, the most blessed day of the whole week."—FLB 36.

"The Sabbath . . . is God's time, not ours; when we trespass upon it we are stealing from God. . . . God has given us the whole of six days in which to do our work, and has reserved only one to Himself. This should be a day of blessing to us—a day when we should lay aside all our secular matters and center our thoughts upon God and heaven. . . .

"We are not to teach our children that they must not be happy on the Sabbath, that it is wrong to walk out of doors. Oh, no. Christ led His disciples out by the lakeside on the Sabbath day and taught them. His sermons on the Sabbath were not always preached within enclosed walls."—HP 152.

"God's love has set a limit to the demands of toil. Over the Sabbath He places His merciful hand. In His own day He preserves for the family opportunity for communion with Him, with nature, and with one another."—Ed 251.

The Sabbath hours belong to God and are to be used for Him alone. Honor God by "not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words" on the Sabbath day (Isa. 58:13 NIV). Our own pleasure, words, business, and thoughts should find no place in the observance of the Lord's day (Isa. 58:13): Let us gather in the family circle at sunset and welcome the Sabbath with prayer and song, and let us close the day with prayer and expressions of gratitude for His wondrous love. The Sabbath is a special day for worship in our homes and churches, a day of joy to ourselves and our children, a day in which we can learn more of God through the Bible and the great lesson book of nature. It is a time we can visit the sick and work for the salvation of souls. We should lay aside the ordinary affairs of the six working days and perform no unnecessary work. We should not let secular media occupy our time on God's holy day.

"The Sabbath is not intended to be a period of useless inactivity. The law forbids secular labor on the rest day of the Lord; the toil that gains a livelihood must cease; no labor for worldly pleasure or profit is lawful upon that day; but as God ceased His labor of creating, and

rested upon the Sabbath and blessed it, so man is to leave the occupations of his daily life, and devote those sacred hours to healthful rest, to worship, and to holy deeds."—DA 207.

A program of activities in harmony with the spirit of true Sabbathkeeping will make this blessed day the happiest and best of all the week for ourselves and for our children—a veritable foretaste of our heavenly rest.

PREMARITAL EDUCATION/COUNSELING - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To call for the vote on the item, Premarital Education/Counseling - *Church Manual* Amendment.

PREMARITAL EDUCATION/COUNSELING - CHURCH MANUAL ADDITION

RATIONALE: This addition to the *Church Manual* emphasizes the importance of premarital education/counseling.

VOTED, To add a new section, Premarital Education/Counseling, to the *Church Manual*, Chapter 13, Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage, following Courtship, on page 154, to read as follows:

Premarital Education/Counseling

Considering that marriage is the most important and challenging of all relationships, premarital education/counseling is designed to help couples planning to marry to be better prepared for this important step in their lives. The main purpose of premarital education/counseling is to prepare couples for the challenges they will encounter in married life. Premarital education/counseling is also to strengthen and improve the future happiness of married couples and reduce the potential rate of divorce. Premarital education/counseling should be offered by a professional counselor or specifically trained individuals, including specifically trained spiritual leaders. (For more detailed information regarding premarital education/counseling see the *Elder's Handbook*.)

PURPOSES OF ORGANIZATION - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate on the item, Purposes of Organization - *Church Manual* Amendment.

CHURCH BOARD CANNOT GRANT LETTERS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment allows the church business meeting to be informed of a member's request to be removed from membership.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 6, Membership, page 54, Church Board Cannot Grant Letters, to read as follows:

Church Board Cannot Grant Letters—A board has no authority to vote letters of transfer or to receive members by letter. The board's authority is limited to making recommendations to the church. Action on all transfers of membership, favorable or otherwise, must be taken by the church. (See pp. 51, 52.) The clerk has no authority to remove names from or add names to the membership record except by vote of the church, unless a member requests in writing to be removed from church membership, in which case the church board must act on the request. The church may be informed of the member's request, but no discussion will take place. Efforts should be made to restore the individual to the church family. When a member dies, the clerk records the date of death in the membership record, and no action by the church is necessary.

Guillermo E Biaggi, Chair
Gary D Krause, Secretary
Hensley M Mooroooven, Actions Editor
Tamara K Boward, Recording Secretary

ELEVENTH BUSINESS MEETING

SESSION ACTIONS

61st General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, June 9, 2022, 2:00 p.m.

RESOLUTION ON THE HOLY BIBLE

VOTED, To refer the motion, Resolution on the Holy Bible, to the General Conference Administrative Committee.

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G WHITE

VOTED, To cease debate on the item, Statement of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen G White.

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G WHITE

VOTED, To not refer the motion, Statement of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen G White, to the General Conference Administrative Committee.

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G WHITE

VOTED, To table the motion on the item, Statement of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen G White.

RESOLUTION ON THE HOLY BIBLE

VOTED, To cease to debate on the motion to reconsider on the item, Resolution on the Holy Bible.

RESOLUTION ON THE HOLY BIBLE

VOTED, To reconsider the referral of the motion on the item, Resolution on the Holy Bible.

RESOLUTION ON THE HOLY BIBLE

VOTED, To cease debate on the item, Resolution on the Holy Bible.

RESOLUTION ON THE HOLY BIBLE

VOTED, To not refer the motion on the item, Resolution on the Holy Bible to the General Conference Administrative Committee.

RESOLUTION ON THE HOLY BIBLE

VOTED, To cease debate on the item, Resolution on the Holy Bible.

RESOLUTION ON THE HOLY BIBLE

VOTED, To approve the Resolution on the Holy Bible, which reads as follows:

RESOLUTION ON THE HOLY BIBLE

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

We believe that the Bible is the prophetic Word of God and through the prophets of the Old Testament, the apostles of the New Testament, and especially through His Son, Jesus Christ, God has revealed how

He will act for the salvation of human beings and execute judgment on wickedness.

We commit ourselves to prayerfully study and follow the Bible, the living and effective Word of God. It is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. It stands forever as a witness to God's will, His law, His thoughts, and His purposes for human beings and for our world, and contains the treasures of eternal wisdom and grace (Isa 40:8; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16, 17). Its principles and teachings are applicable in all times, all places, all languages, and all cultures for all people. It speaks credibly and relevantly today as it has in the past and will continue to speak as long as time shall last.

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

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

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G WHITE

VOTED, To take from the table the motion, Statement of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen G White.

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G WHITE

VOTED, To cease debate on the item, Statement of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen G White.

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G WHITE

VOTED, To approve the Statement of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen G White, which reads as follows:

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G WHITE

As delegates to the 2022 General Conference Session in St Louis, Missouri, we express our deep gratitude for God's prophetic guidance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Aiming to live "by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4, NKJV; cf. Luke 10:16), we take seriously the biblical passages that teach the abiding nature of the gift of prophecy (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:10, 28; Eph 4:11-14) and promise its end-time manifestation (Joel 2:28-31; Rev 12:17; 19:10; 22:9). We recognize the gift of prophecy in the life and ministry of Ellen G White (1827-1915).

We believe that the writings of Ellen G White were inspired by the Holy Spirit and are Christ centered and Bible based. Rather than replacing Scripture, they uplift its normative character, safeguard the Church from "every wind of doctrine" (Eph 4:14), and offer an inspired guide to Bible passages without exhausting their meaning or preventing further study. They also help us to overcome the human tendency to accept from the Bible what we like and to distort or disregard what we do not like.

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

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

GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate on the item, General Conference Executive Committee - Constitution and Bylaws Amendment.

GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment accomplishes the following:

1. Removes Christian Record Services from the list of General Conference-sponsored entities, as it is now sponsored by the North American Division.
2. Clarifies that the position of editor for *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World* is the same person.
3. Defines the term "frontline employee" with the use of examples.
4. Provides an approval process for the minutes of the General Conference Executive Committee, including Annual Council and Spring Meeting.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution Article VIII—General Conference Executive Committee, to read as follows:

ARTICLE VIII—GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sec. 1. The Executive Committee of the General Conference shall consist of:

- a. Ex Officio Members—1) Those elected as provided for in - No change
- 2) Presidents of unions, past presidents of the General - No change
- 3) The president-executive director of each of the following organizations provided the respective organization remains classified as a General Conference-sponsored entity: Adventist Development and Relief Agency International, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Adventist Risk Management, Adventist University of Africa, Adventist World Radio, Andrews University, *Christian Record Services*, Hope Channel, Loma Linda University Health, Review and Herald Publishing Association.
- 4) The editor of each of the following publications: *Adventist Review*, *Adventist World*, *Adventist Review/Adventist World*, *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, *Ministry*.
- 5) The director of each of the following - No change
- 6) The president and board chair of Ellen G White Estate - No change

b. Elected Members—1) Three laypersons and one church pastor from each division without regard to membership size up to 500,000 members. One additional church pastor or other ~~frontline~~ denominational employee denominational employee, with direct mission contact, such as Bible worker, health care professional, literature evangelist, teacher, etc. for each additional 500,000 members or major portion thereof. The above laypersons, pastors, and other denominational employees shall be selected by each division executive committee from individuals recommended by the union executive committees and shall be Seventh-day Adventists in regular standing.

2) No fewer than fifteen and no more than twenty - No change

3) No fewer than fifteen and no more than twenty - No change

Sec. 2. Minutes of the General Conference Executive Committee, including those of Annual Council and Spring Meeting, shall be approved at the next meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee, after such minutes have been circulated electronically to the Executive Committee members.

GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate on the item, General Conference Executive Committee - Constitution and Bylaws Amendment.

GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment allows the General Conference Executive Committee to review and extend the postponement of General Conference Sessions and determine the timing for a subsequent Session after a postponement.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution Article V—General Conference Sessions, to read as follows:

ARTICLE V—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS

Sec. 1. The General Conference shall hold quinquennial sessions at such time and place as the General Conference Executive Committee shall designate and announce by a notice published in the *Adventist Review* or *Adventist World* or other publications voted by the General Conference Executive Committee in three consecutive months beginning at least four months before the date for the opening of the Session. In case special world conditions make it imperative to postpone the calling of the Session, the General Conference Executive Committee, in regular or special council, shall have authority to make such postponement, not to exceed two years giving notice to all constituent organizations. In the event that the General Conference Executive Committee exercises its authority to postpone a Session, it shall also have the authority to set the subsequent regular Session at such time and place as it shall see fit, not to exceed five calendar years from the date the postponed Session was convened.

Sec. 2. The General Conference Executive Committee may call - No change

Sec. 3. At least one-third of the total delegates authorized hereinafter - No change

Sec. 4. Generally, regular or specially called General Conference Sessions are to be held in person and onsite. However, when requested by the General Conference Executive Committee, delegates may participate by means of an electronic conference or similar communications by which all persons participating can hear each other at the same time, and participation by such means shall constitute presence in person and attendance at such a meeting. Votes cast remotely shall have the same validity as if the delegates met and voted onsite.

[Proposed new Sec. 5. See 214-22GSb.]

[Proposed new Sec. 6. See 214-22GSc.]

Sec.-5: Sec. 7. The delegates to a General Conference Session shall be - No change

Sec.-6: Sec. 8. Regular delegates shall represent the General Conference's - No change

Sec.-7: Sec. 9. Regular delegates shall be allotted on the following - No change

Sec.-8: Sec. 10. Delegates at large shall represent the General - No change

Sec.-9: Sec. 11. Division administrations shall consult with unions to ensure - No change

Sec.-10: Sec. 12. Credentials to sessions shall be issued by the - No change

Sec.-11: Sec. 13. Calculations for all delegate allotments, as provided - No change

[Proposed new Sec. 14. See 214-22GSc.]

Geoffrey G Mbwana, Chair

Elbert Kuhn, Secretary

Hensley M Mooroooven, Actions Editor

Joanne Stango, Recording Secretary

TWELFTH BUSINESS MEETING

SESSION ACTIONS

61st General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, June 9, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

BUSINESS MEETINGS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment clarifies some of the organizational aspects of the church business meeting.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Services and Other Meetings, page 128, Business Meetings, to read as follows:

Business Meetings

The local church operates within defined roles in Seventh-day Adventist Church structure. Within the context of those roles, the business meeting is the constituency meeting of the local church. (See p. 27) Members in regular standing are encouraged to attend and are entitled to vote. A member under censure has no right to participate by voice or vote.

Business meetings shall be held at least once a year. The pastor, or the board in consultation with and support of the pastor, calls the meeting. Business meetings ~~should be typically~~ are announced a week or two in advance at the regular Sabbath worship service, with detail as to time and place. The pastor, an elder ~~arranged~~ chosen by the pastor, or, in some cases, the conference president, or ~~his designee~~, serves as chairperson of the business meeting.

Each church decides what the quorum will be for future meetings.

Votes by proxy or letter are not permitted.

Major items should be decided at a regular or specially called business meeting.

The business meeting has authority over the board and may delegate responsibilities to the board in addition to those already assigned by the *Church Manual*. (See pp. 129-132.)

The business meeting agenda should include reports about the work of the church. At least once a year the agenda should include reports covering church activities. Based on those reports, a proposed plan of action for the next year, including an annual budget, should be presented for approval. When possible, reports and plans for the next year should be presented in writing. (See Notes, #7, pp. 183, 184.)

In order to maintain a spirit of cooperation between the church and conference, the church shall secure counsel from conference officers on all major matters.

Conference and union officers (president, secretary, treasurer) or

their designee may attend without vote (unless granted by the church) any business meeting of any church in their territory. An action to allow voting is not required if the officer is currently a member of that congregation.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ELECTION PROCESS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment provides for a standing nominating committee.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Elections, pages 110-113, Nominating Committee and the Election Process, to read as follows:

Nominating Committee and the Election Process

Officers are elected every one or two years (see p. 72) through an appointed nominating committee. In exceptional circumstances, and in consultation with the conference, the term of office may be extended an additional year. This committee brings its report to the church, which then votes on the names presented. This procedure enables the church to give careful study to each name prior to election and avoids the competitive element that may arise when nominations are made from the floor.

The nominating committee shall study the needs of the church and inquire into the fitness of members to serve in the different offices. This is another reason officers shall not be nominated from the floor or by general ballot.

The church may decide based on its needs that it would be best served with a standing nominating committee. As such, it may appoint such a committee which would function year-round to make nominations for vacancies or to fill regular positions identified in the *Church Manual*.

The size of the nominating committee will range from five members in a small church to a larger number in a large church. The number to be chosen is left to the discretion of each church and should be studied by the board. A suitable recommendation then will be brought to the church, using a minimum of time in the Sabbath worship hour.

Quorum—The quorum for the nominating committee may be determined by the church at the same time the committee is elected. (See pp. 128, 131.)

When and How the Nominating Committee Is Appointed—The

nominating committee should be appointed early in the closing quarter of the church year election term and should report at least three weeks before the final Sabbath of the election term, except in the case of a standing nominating committee, which functions year-round, church year.

The pastor or district leader or, in the absence of the pastor or district leader, the elder should bring the matter to the attention of the church. The church shall then appoint an organizing committee responsible to nominate the nominating committee. This organizing committee may be chosen in one of two ways:

1. By nominations, verbal or written, from the floor. If verbal nominations are made, no member may nominate more than one person. The effort of one individual or a small group to dictate to the entire membership is disapproved. Every effort should be made to ensure fair representation in the composition of the organizing committee. Everything of a political nature should be avoided. The pastor or district leader shall serve as chairperson of this organizing committee. If a pastor or district leader has not yet been appointed to serve as church leader, the chairperson of this organizing committee shall be appointed by the board from among the members of the organizing committee. The size of the organizing committee should be five to seven more than the number of board members.

2. By the church authorizing the board, together with five to seven additional persons chosen by the church (see preceding paragraph), to function as the organizing committee. If this method is adopted, the chairperson of the board normally serves as chairperson of the organizing committee (see p. 32).

In the case of a standing nominating committee, the board may fill any vacancies in their membership, or the organizing committee may choose to nominate a new list of members for the nominating committee for election by the church in business session.

How the Process Works—The steps of the nominating process are:

1. The church appoints by vote an organizing committee by one of the two methods listed above.

2. The organizing committee recommends names to the church for the nominating committee, with a recommendation for secretary. Every effort should be made to ensure fair representation in the composition of the nominating committee representing a range of age groups and both genders and limiting representation to no more than two members from the same immediate family, committee.

3. By vote, the church appoints the nominating committee and the secretary.

4. The pastor or district leader is an ex officio member and serves as chairperson of the nominating committee. Should the pastor or district leader choose not to serve as chairperson, or if a pastor or district leader has not been appointed to the church, the organizing committee shall recommend the name from the proposed nominating committee to serve as chairperson.

5. The nominating committee meets to prepare the list of officers that it will present to the church for approval.

6. By vote, the church appoints its officers for the ensuing year(s) who continue to serve until their resignation, replacement, or the beginning of the new election term, year.

Who Should Be Members of the Nominating Committee—Only members - No change

Work of the Nominating Committee—The chairperson should call - No change

Nominating Committee to Get Consent of Prospective Officers—Having - No change

Members May Appear Before the Nominating Committee—Members - No change

Nominating Committee Discussions Are Confidential—All inquiries - No change

Reporting to the Church—The nominating committee's report is presented - No change

Objections to the Report of the Nominating Committee—Members may - No change

Filling Vacancies Between Elections—If an office of the church becomes vacant during the term of office because of death, removal, resignation, or any other reason, and there is no standing nominating committee to fill the nominations, the board may nominate the board nominates a successor to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term of office and submits the nomination to the church for election.

TERM OF OFFICE - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment allows for three-year terms of office in exceptional circumstances, if approved by the conference.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 72, Term of Office, to read as follows:

Term of Office

The term of office for officers of both the church and its auxiliary organizations shall be one year, except where the church in a business meeting votes to have elections every two years in order to facilitate continuity and development of spiritual gifts and eliminate the work involved in having yearly elections. In exceptional circumstances, and in consultation with the conference, the term of office may be extended an additional year.

While it is not advisable for one person to serve indefinitely in a particular position, officers may be reelected.

YOUTH MINISTRIES - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To call for the vote on the item, Youth Ministries - Church Manual Amendment.

YOUTH MINISTRIES - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment is coming as a recommendation from General Conference Youth Ministries in consultation with the divisions

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, pages 104-109, to read as follows:

Adventist Youth Ministries

The various youth organizations of the church should work closely with the youth ministries department of the conference. The church works for and with its youth through Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM), the AYM. Under the AYM, youth are to work together, in cooperation with the wider church community, towards the development of a strong youth ministry that includes spiritual, mental, and physical development of each individual, Christian social interaction, and an active witnessing program that supports the general soul-winning plans of the church. In the quest for discipleship, the goal of AYM should be to bring all youth to a saving relationship with Christ, build them up in His Word to reflect a Christ-like character, train them how to serve the church and communities using their spiritual gifts, and send them out to reach the communities in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM)—The church works for and with its youth through the AYM. Under the AYM, youth are to work together,

in cooperation with the wider church community, towards the development of a strong youth ministry that includes spiritual, mental, and physical development of each individual, Christian social interaction, and an active witnessing program that supports the general soul-winning plans of the church. The goal of AYM should be to involve all youth in activities that will lead them to active church membership and train them for Christian service.

AYM Mission—To lead young people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and help them embrace His call to discipleship.

AYM Motto—The love of Christ compels us.

AYM Aim—The Advent Message to all the world in my generation.

The youth ministries program of the church comprises three broad categories, namely: Junior Youth (Adventurers: ages 6-9 ages 4-9 and Pathfinders: ages 10-15), Senior Youth (Ambassadors: ages 16-21 and Young Adults: ages 22-30+; ages 22-30), and Public Campus Students: ages 16-30+.

God said to Moses, “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deut. 6:6-9).

The apostle Paul added, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12).

“We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged. . . . We want them to be blessed of God. We want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth.”—GCB, Jan. 29, 30, 1893, p. 24.

“When the youth give their hearts to God, our responsibility for them does not cease. They must be interested in the Lord’s work, and led to see that He expects them to do something to advance His cause. It is not enough to show how much needs to be done, and to urge the youth to act a part. They must be taught how to labor for the Master. They must be trained, disciplined, drilled, in the best methods of winning souls to Christ. Teach them to try in a quiet, unpretending way to help their young companions. Let different branches of missionary effort be systematically laid out, in which they may take part, and let them be given instruction and help. Thus they will learn to work for God.”—GW 210.

“With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!”—MYP 196.

While there is to be an active Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) in every church, it is important that the youth program not be isolated from the rest of the church. In addition to their AYM participation, youth should be integrated into responsible leadership and in all lines of church work. As young elders, deacons, and deaconesses, for example, they can work with and learn from experienced officers.

“In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause. To plan with clear mind and execute with courageous hand demands fresh, uncrippled energies. Young men and women are invited to give God the strength of their youth, that through the exercise of their powers, through keen thought and vigorous action, they may bring glory to Him and salvation to their fellow men.”—GW 67.

Adventist Youth Ministries Committee—The Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Committee is the umbrella organization in the church for the general planning of the youth ministry program. (See pp. 133, 134.) The AYM Committee includes the following church-elected officers: Young Adults leader, Public Campus Ministries leader/coordinator, Ambassador leader, Pathfinder director, Adventurer director, plus the personal ministries leader, youth Sabbath School division leader, children’s ministries leader, health ministries leader, principal of the school, the AYM advisor, sponsor, and the pastor. The Young Adults leader, Ambassador leader, Pathfinder director, Adventurer director, and Public Campus Ministries leader are members of the church board.

If there are no distinct Ambassador ministry or young adults ministries established in the church, or until such time as they are established, the AYM Committee will plan for the senior youth ministry to include both age groups.

In parts of the world where there is no Pathfinder or Adventurer ministry, or until such time as they are organized, the AYM Committee will plan for appropriate activities for the junior youth.

The AYM leader (formerly known as the AYS director), who is a member of the board, chairs this committee. The Young Adults leader may chair the AYM Committee. The committee should meet as necessary to develop short- and long-range goals and plans for a successful ministry. (See Notes, #18, pp. 177, 178.)

Young Adults Ministries Committee—The Young Adults Ministries - No change

Public Campus Ministries—Strengthening the Youth Ministries - No change

Public Campus Ministries Leader/Coordinator—The church may - No change

Ambassador Ministry—The Ambassador Ministry provides - No change

Ambassador Committee—The Ambassador Committee is responsible - No change

Pathfinder Club—The Pathfinder Club provides a church-centered - No change

Pathfinder Committee—The Pathfinder Club director and deputy directors are elected by the church. (See pp. 105, 179.) If two deputy directors are elected, there should be one male and one female. One of the deputy directors may also serve as club secretary and treasurer. The director is a member of the board and the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Committee.

Additional Pathfinder staff may include instructors of craft and nature classes and counselors who are each responsible for a unit of six to eight Pathfinders.

Resource materials are available from the conference youth ministries director.

Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #7, pp. 168, 169.)

Adventurer Club—The Adventurer Club provides home and church programs for parents with 6-to-9-year-old 4- to 9-year-old children. It is designed to stimulate the children’s curiosity and includes age-specific activities that involve both parents and child in recreational activities, simple crafts, appreciation of God’s creation, and other activities that are of interest to that age. All is carried out with

a spiritual focus, setting the stage for participation in the church as a Pathfinder.

Adventurer Committee—The church elects the club director and associates. (See pp. 104, 178.) Additional staff members are selected by the administrative staff of the club. The director is a member of the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Committee.

Resource materials are available from the conference youth ministries director.

Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #8, pp. 174, 175.)

AYM Officers—The leaders/directors of the ~~four~~ five youth ministry entities must exemplify Christlike graces and have a burden for soul winning and contagious enthusiasm. The five leaders/directors are members of the church board. In helping motivate youth to work together and take responsibilities, the leaders/directors will be in the background—guiding, counseling, and encouraging youth, helping them gain experience and the joys of achievement. The leaders/directors should study the youth profile of the church and seek to involve every eligible youth in the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM).

The leaders/directors will keep in touch with the pastor, their respective sponsors, advisor, and the conference youth ministries director, taking advantage of opportunities for in-service training and leading their respective ministry into a cooperative relationship with the church and the conference.

The associate leaders/deputy directors (if needed) will assist the leaders/directors and perform leadership duties when the leaders/directors are absent. The respective committees may assign additional responsibilities to the associate leaders/directors.

The secretary-treasurers will keep a record of the activities of their respective ministries, submit monthly reports on forms provided to the conference youth ministries director, and encourage youth to report their witnessing activities during the ten-minute personal ministries period.

The respective assistant secretary-treasurers (if needed) assist with the secretary-treasurers' work as assigned.

AYM Advisor—~~The Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) advisor Sponsor—The Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) sponsor~~ may be an elder or other person on the board who understands the objectives of the AYM, is sympathetic with youth and their involvement in the church's ministries, and will serve as a valued counselor to the youth. The ~~sponsor~~ advisor serves as a guide or counselor to AYM officers and joins them regularly in AYM Committee meetings. ~~The sponsor will work with the AYM leader to present the ministry's needs to the board.~~

The ~~sponsor~~ ministry leader should become acquainted with the conference youth ministries director and keep the director informed of changes in officer personnel and other AYM matters. Along with AYM leaders, the ~~sponsor~~ advisor should attend conference youth training institutes to keep informed about developments in youth ministry.

For the sake of continuity, the ~~sponsor~~ advisor, if possible, should serve multiple terms.

Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks

and certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #7, pp. 168, 169.)

Resources—For youth ministries resources, see Notes, #17, p. 171.

MEMBERSHIP (CHURCH BOARD AND ITS MEETINGS) - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This proposed amendment updates the membership list of the church board in accordance with other *Church Manual* additions and amendments being brought to the 2022 General Conference Session.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Services and Other Meetings, pages 130 and 131, Membership (Church Board and Its Meetings), to read as follows:

Membership—The board is elected by the members at the time of the regular election officers. (See pp. 71, 72.) In addition to conference appointed pastors, the church should elect a representative board that includes the following officers:

- Elders
- Head deacon
- Head deaconess
- Treasurer
- Clerk
- Interest coordinator
- Adventist Community Services leader or Dorcas Society leader
- Adventist Men's coordinator
- Adventist Possibility Ministries leader
- Adventist Youth Ministries
 - Adventurer Club director
 - Ambassador Club leader
 - Pathfinder Club director
 - Public Campus Ministries leader/coordinator
 - Young Adults leader
- Adventist Youth Ministries leader
 - Adventurer Club director
 - Ambassador Club leader
 - Bible school coordinator
 - Children's ministries leader
 - Church music coordinator
 - Communication committee chairperson or communication secretary
 - Education secretary/church school principal or head teacher
 - Family ministries leader
 - Health ministries leader
 - Home and School Association leader
 - Pathfinder Club director
 - Personal ministries leader and secretary
 - Public Campus Ministries leader/coordinator
 - Publishing ministries coordinator
 - Religious liberty leader
 - Sabbath School superintendent
 - Stewardship ministries leader
 - Women's ministries leader
 - Young adults leader

In some cases, depending on the size of the membership, the board may not include all of this list or may add additional members. The pastor appointed by the conference to serve the church always is a member of the board.

REDEMPTIVE MEMBERSHIP REVIEW - CHURCH MANUAL ADDITION

RATIONALE: This new section on redemptive membership review is being added as a recommendation of the Nurture and Retention Committee.

VOTED, To add a new section, Redemptive Membership Review,

to the *Church Manual*, Chapter 6, Membership, following Membership Record, on page 55, to read as follows:

Redemptive Membership Review—Membership records are kept up to date by the local church. They are subject to review by the next higher organization. This rule, which also applies to every entity or level of the organization, provides the maximum privacy of members' personal information and shall comply with legal requirements. (See p. 82.)

In the Bible we find the words, “[N]ot forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching (Heb. 10:25). There is great need to seek for those who are far away. Ellen G. White says, “If the lost sheep is not brought back to the fold, it wanders until it perishes. And many souls go down to ruin for want of a hand stretched out to save” (COL 191). It is a most needed ministry to review the membership records and to approach this exercise in a Christ-like redemptive way.

CHURCH RECORDS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment provides for the auditing of church membership records.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 82, Church Records, to read as follows:

Church Records—The clerk keeps church records, which should be carefully preserved. All records and account books of all officers are the property of the church and are to be surrendered to the newly elected clerk at the expiration of the term of office of the previous clerk, or to the church at any time during the term on request of the pastor or elders. Church records, within the privacy limitations of local law, are subject to review by the next higher organization. (See p. 55.)

MAKING DISCIPLES - CHURCH MANUAL ADDITION

RATIONALE: This is a new chapter on the importance of discipleship.

VOTED, To add a new chapter to the *Church Manual*, Chapter 6, Making Disciples, following Chapter 5, Organizing, Uniting, and Dissolving Churches and Companies, on page 43, to read as follows:

Making Disciples

Making disciples is a continuous process by which a person becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ, matures as His disciple, and makes more disciples. Baptism is an essential part of the discipleship process, but it is not the end result of that process.

Seventh-day Adventists accept with honor and humility the command of Jesus contained in the Gospel Commission to “go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matt. 28:19). We are to obey this Commission, as we live in these last days, within the context of the Three Angels’ Messages (Rev. 14:6-12).

The Gospel Commission’s main emphasis to “make disciples” contains three parts:

1. “Go therefore and make disciples” is Jesus’ command to fulfill the mission. Thus, making disciples should be our way of life. We are to go and make disciples in our homes, our work, our schools, and in our everyday interactions with others. We are to make disciples of every nation, tribe, language, and people. The goal of witnessing and evangelism is disciple-making (Matt. 10:25, Matt. 28:19, 20).

2. “Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” is not the end goal but an important part in the process of discipleship as people acknowledge Jesus Christ as their

Lord and Savior, become part of His church, and commit to making more disciples. Disciples are baptized into Christ’s body, the church. Their commitment to obey Christ in making disciples should be demonstrated before baptism.

3. “Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you,” indicates that teaching is a vital and ongoing experience of maturing in the experience of discipleship. “Teaching” should take place before and after baptism.

Making disciples is a continuous process with its purpose being grown “in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18) into Christian maturity and multiplication of disciples.

Growing as a disciple and making disciples to prepare them for the second coming of Jesus, is not optional; it is the essence of our last-day commission as Seventh-day Adventists. Genuine discipleship only happens as a result of the amazing grace of Jesus Christ. We can take comfort that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him, and He promises to be with us to the end of the world (Matt. 28:18, 20). Further, He promises us the Holy Spirit as our Teacher, Guide, and Power (John 16:7-16; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:4, 5, 8; 2:37-39).

What is a Disciple?

In Jesus’ time, disciples were followers whose instruction was wholistic and comprehensive. The disciples of Jesus spent so much time with Him that they received His teachings and learned valuable lifestyle lessons. A disciple is one whose choices, decisions, and worldview are being transformed by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.

Christian disciples pattern their faith, character, and mission after the faith, character, and mission of their Teacher, Jesus. A disciple is one who has made a commitment to follow Christ and bring their life under the Lordship of Christ.

A disciple is a person who is becoming more like Jesus Christ in every way (Eph. 4:15). The process of disciple-making is a continuous process. It also entails teaching new believers how to bring their lives into conformity with the Word of God through various programs such as mentoring, small group ministries, Bible studies, service, etc.

1. Thus, discipleship impacts every area of our lives: our beliefs, character, lifestyle, relationships, work, entertainment, finances, health, witness, and our burden to see others in God’s kingdom.

2. “Is becoming” indicates that discipleship is an ongoing activity of following Jesus.

3. “More like Jesus Christ” means that Christ is our Savior and Lord and the only perfect example for us to follow.

Growth of a Disciple

The discipleship journey starts when one takes the first steps toward Jesus (see John 1:35-2:2). Abiding in Him daily and following His Word, one can continue to grow in Christlikeness. Some of the key areas in which Scripture indicates disciples must mature in personal development, as well as part of a community of believers, are listed below:

1. *Worship/Personal Devotion:* “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37 ESV). Worship is our response to God’s initiating work in our lives. True worship is not focused on us but on God (Ps. 150:6; John 4:23; Rev. 14:7).

“We need to cherish and cultivate a spirit of true worship, a spirit of devotion upon the Lord’s holy, sanctified day. We should assemble together believing that we shall receive comfort and hope, light and peace from Jesus Christ.”—FLB 35.

“Personal religion will reveal itself in bearing good fruit, sanctification is not the work of a day, but a lifetime. . . . There should be in the heart of everyone grace which can bloom in the garden of God. Selfishness will cut out every precious likeness of Christ, will expel humility and self-denial and devotion.”—PM 91.

2. *Ministry to Others*: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:39 ESV). Every disciple is called and gifted by God for the benefit of the church and to take the gospel message to the world (1 Peter 2:9; 4:10).

“[The disciples’] office was the most important to which human beings had ever been called, second only to that of Christ Himself. They were to be workers together with God for the saving of men.”—AA 19.

3. *Witnessing/Need-Based Evangelism*: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations . . .” (Matt. 28:19 ESV). Witness and evangelism happen best when following Christ’s method of ministry to the whole person.

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”—MH 143.

4. *Obedience*: “. . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:20 ESV). A primary indication of true discipleship is faithfulness to Christ and His Word and submission to Him as our Lord. Jesus said, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” (John 14:15 ESV).

“Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship. Thus, the Scripture says, ‘This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments’”—SC 60.

A faithful disciple is one who recognizes the Shepherd’s voice and continually seeks to learn in order to obey more completely. Reflecting Christ’s character and laboring for the enlargement of His kingdom is to be our overriding passion. This includes growth in character, stewardship and service (Eph. 4:13-15; Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:17, 18; 1 John 3:2).

5. *Community/Outreach*: “. . . baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19 ESV). True discipleship only happens within a community that is built on the foundation of Jesus Christ and His Word, where worship, ministry, evangelism, and obedience are given the highest priority (Rev. 14:6-12).

“Let small companies assemble in the evening, at noon, or in the early morning to study the Bible. Let them have a season of prayer, that they may be strengthened, enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This work Christ wants to have done in the heart of every worker. If you yourselves will open the door to receive it, a great blessing will come to you. Angels of God will be in your assembly. You will feed upon the leaves of the tree of life. What testimonies you may bear of the loving acquaintance made with your fellow workers in these precious seasons when seeking the blessing of God.”—7T 195.

Practical Steps

The grace of Jesus Christ is not cheap. It cost Him His life. Anyone who accepts Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior needs to know that being His disciple also comes at a cost. “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Mark 8:34, NIV).

Disciples grow Christlike in character amid the routines of day-to-day life. Through the intentional practices of daily Bible study, prayer, service, and mission, we grow ever deeper in our discipleship

commitment. A fully committed disciple continually “walks” with Christ, being with Him, modeling one’s life after Him, and obeying Him in one’s ordinary daily activities.

The work of making disciples is ongoing. “The Saviour’s commission to the disciples included all the believers. It includes all believers in Christ to the end of time.”—DA 822. Therefore, patterning one’s life after Jesus’ example is a personal responsibility as well as a teaching responsibility that every church member owes to those who are young in the faith. Church membership and even church activity by themselves are insufficient. Ongoing personal growth as a disciple is necessary to have an impactful and lasting relationship with God.

Love, The Defining Mark of a Disciple

Loving others as God loves us, which is intimately connected to unity, is the ultimate indication of true discipleship. “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another” (John 13:35, ESV).

“Christ has given us a pattern in his own example. He would bind his followers to one another and to himself. Their oneness with Christ makes them love one another, for love is the sure fruit of unity with Christ. Christ declared that their love for one another was a sure badge of their discipleship”—Ms 51, 1894.

True love for Jesus means more than His disciples loving each other; they must share God’s love with others. If we love God, we will obey His command to “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. . . .” (Matt. 28:19).

God’s love is the defining mark of a disciple because in love all other characteristics of discipleship are complete. Christ “mentioned only one condition of discipleship and service. ‘Lovest thou Me?’ He said. This is the essential qualification”—DA 815. “The love of Christ is not a fitful feeling, but a living principle, which is to be made manifest as an abiding power in the heart. . . .”—RC 345.

PURPOSES OF ORGANIZATION - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment expresses the importance of finding new ways to reach the varied and diverse cultures of the world with the Seventh-day Adventist message, including the forming of new mission groups.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 3, Organization and Authority, pages 25 and 26, Purposes of Organization, to read as follows:

Missionary Purposes of Organization

Our mission remains unchanged wherever we find ourselves in the world. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been organized for the purpose of mission. However, the way in which we fulfill that mission will of necessity take a variety of forms due to different cultural and societal norms. As we seek to share the gospel in cross-cultural contexts, we will encounter societies where particular religious bodies deem other writings as sacred, where restrictions to religious freedom sometimes exist, where diverse points of view and practices occur, as well as other challenges. To fulfill the mission in such diverse contexts, we rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit and employ a flexible approach to sharing God’s love in a manner that reaches hearts, while preserving our unique calling and identity as Seventh-day Adventists.

The conditions Seventh-day Adventists face in sharing the message of Jesus to people of other religions largely parallel those that the apostles encountered. How they went about the mission is instructive for us today. Although they modified their approach in keeping with the audience, they never deviated from proclaiming the uniqueness of Jesus as the hope of the world. They never suggested that they had come to help their hearers find a deeper

spiritual experience within their own religions; on the contrary, they challenged them to turn to the salvation provided in Christ.

Groups should be formed to lead all people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and into fellowship with the remnant church. In forming such groups, a theologically sound, culturally informed plan of action should be prayerfully developed and followed to guide these new believers into membership. These groups should be established and nurtured in collaboration with local administration and guidelines of the world Church. Leaders of these groups should seek to lead the people into membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The church is a missionary community and its organization exists to fulfill this purpose.

“As our numbers increased, it was evident that without some form of organization there would be great confusion, and the work would not be carried forward successfully. To provide for the support of the ministry, for carrying the work in new fields, for protecting both the churches and the ministry from unworthy members, for holding church property, for the publication of the truth through the press, and for many other objects, organization was indispensable.”—TM 26.

“As members of the visible church, and workers in the vineyard of the Lord, all professed Christians should do their utmost to preserve peace, harmony, and love in the church. Mark the prayer of Christ: ‘That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.’ The unity of the church is the convincing evidence that God has sent Jesus into the world as its Redeemer.”—5T 619, 620.

PROPER METHOD FOR PAYMENT OF MONEY BY MEMBERS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment includes the use of electronic payments as a proper method of returning tithes and offerings.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, pages 84 and 85, Proper Method for Payment of Money by Members, to read as follows:

Proper Method for Payment of Money by Members—The treasurer should urge that all money paid in by members, other than the regular church collection, be placed in tithe and offering envelopes, unless an alternative method approved by the conference, such as electronic payments, has been implemented. ~~method has been implemented by the conference.~~ Members should list the various items and amounts on the envelope as indicated and to make sure that the money enclosed equals the total shown. They should also sign their names and give their addresses, and place the envelopes in the offering plate or hand them to the treasurer, who should preserve the envelopes to serve as vouchers until all accounts are checked by the conference auditor.

Members who return their tithes and offerings by check or postal

notes should, where legally possible, make such checks or notes payable to the church, rather than to any individual.

TERMS USED IN THE CHURCH MANUAL - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment allows for the counsels and principles addressed in the *Church Manual* to be followed by a company, in the same manner as in the local church, without the need to repeat “company” throughout the Manual.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 1, *Why a Church Manual?*, pages 18 and 19, Terms Used in the *Church Manual*, to read as follows:

Terms Used in the *Church Manual*

Church—For editorial and printing economy, “Church,” with a capital C, in these pages is used in place of the full term “Seventh-day Adventist Church” and refers to the overall Church organization rather than to a local church or congregation, with the exception of when it is referred to within a quotation. References to a local church will also generally apply to a company.

Conference, mission, section, delegation, field, union of churches—For purposes of editorial and printing economy, “conference” in these pages means “conference, mission, field, section, delegation, or union of churches,” as the administrative context indicates. Generally, each congregation is a member of the sisterhood of churches known as a conference, but until the local organization achieves conference status, under General Conference *Working Policy* it may be identified as a mission, section, delegation, or field. In some world divisions, unions of churches in a particular country function as a conference for local-church purposes and as a union for other Church organizational purposes. (See Chapter 3, “Organization and Authority.”)

Pastor and minister—Most areas of the world Church use “pastor” to identify a member of the clergy, so that term is used in these pages rather than “minister,” regardless of the responsibilities assigned by the local conference. Use of the term here is not intended to mandate that usage where the custom is to use “minister.” Pastors referred to in this manual are those who have been appointed by the conference to oversee the affairs of the local church or district.

Abbreviations of Ellen G. White’s books are identified on p. 186.

Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise indicated, with the exception of when referred to within a Spirit of Prophecy quotation.

ADJOURNMENT

VOTED, To adjourn sine die.

Thomas L Lemon, Chair
 Karen J Porter, Secretary
 Hensley M Mooroooven, Actions Editor
 Tamara K Boward, Recording Secretary

Speakers and Writers

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MEET THE TEAM

When the *Adventist Review* reported from the first General Conference Session in 1863, the staff consisted of a few men who dutifully wrote about all that occurred. Almost 160 years later, with the advance of media and technology, a larger team reports on a GC Session, including full-time staff, temporary staff, and volunteers. Those pictured above share skills required to report, write, film, interview, design, photograph, upload, post, manage, and more.

Seated (left to right): Jae-man Park, Gerald Klingbeil, Bill Knott, Lael Caesar, Wilona Karimabadi, Enno Müller, Brandon Armstrong

2nd Row (left to right): Daun Redfield, Beth Thomas, Daniel Bosqued, Daniel Bruneau, Hannah Klingbeil, Marvene Thorpe-Baptiste, Kim Brown, Jamica Armstrong, Daryl Gungadoo, Greg Scott, Mark Froelich, Jane Sherwin, David Sherwin

3rd Row (left to right): Hyo-jun Kim, Christian Müller, Diogo Cavalcanti, Ellen Musselman, Brett Meliti, Jan White, Phil White, Jewlee Meadows, Shawn Craig, Marcos Paseggi, Yves Senty, Josef Kissinger, James Bokovoy

4th Row (left to right): Tim Lale, Shawn Boonstra, Jared Thurmon, Bryan Gray, Marcos Blanco, Gabriel Begle, Pedro Torres, Merle Poirier, Jonathan Wold, Nikolas Schwartz, Matthias Müller

Not Pictured: Danae Songy, Debbie Michel, Ed Boyle, Ivan Riapalov, Marcos de Benedicto, Sharon Tennyson



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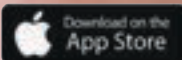
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