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**Minutes of the
Thirty-Ninth Annual District Conference
Pacific Southwest District Church of the Brethren**

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October 4-6, 2002

La Verne, California

The church gathered in singing hymns and praises to God.

- I. George Sparks, Moderator, led in worship by reading the theme scripture, II Corinthians 4:5-9. He also shared some remarks and made appointments. He introduced Myrna Wheeler, who will serve as Acting Moderator for 2003. Bill Wagoner will be the Honorary Moderator for the year. Richard Hart, Interim District Executive, was introduced. The Dedication of Delegates followed. George announced appointments made for the Business Session. Tellers will be Milton Ewert, Head Teller; Sharon Sparks; Donna McAvoy; and Mike Martin. Vera Mae Gephart will serve as Parliamentarian. Joe Schechter will serve as Timekeeper.
- II. Board Chair, Sara Haldeman-Scarr, made introductions of General Board staff, representatives of denominational organizations, and other guests.
- III. Eighty-four delegates were present. A quorum was declared to be present. The agenda was approved as amended. *M/s/c* (p. 61 of the Business Book. The Business Book is an attachment to the minutes of the Conference.)
- IV. A Motion was made to add an item to the agenda to discuss a letter to President Bush. *M/s/c*.
- V. Joe Schechter, Convener of the Committee to Review the Minutes of the 2001 District Conference, reported that the minutes of the 2001 Conference were consistent with the business that occurred. *M/s/c* (pp. 43-47 of the Business Book)
- VI. Valentina Satvedi read I Corinthians 12, concerning the gifts of the Spirit. She recognized several people who have been called to use specific gifts for the work of the district, Richard Hart, Ataloo Woodin, Willard Ressler, and Jim Merrifield. She introduced pastors new to the district or in new placements: Elizabeth Rowen, Pasadena; Bill Haldeman-Scarr, Pomona Fellowship; Don Brewer, Church of the Living Savior, McFarland; Thomas Dowdy, Imperial Heights; and Susan Boyer, La Verne. Karen Walters and Ward White, were called to licensed Ministry. Myrna Wheeler, Thomas Dowdy, Elizabeth Rowan, Nick Corral, Kate Gandy, Don Brewer, and Greg Lazacovits have been ordained. Bill Haldeman-Scarr serves as Director of Training in Ministry (TRIM). Sharon Nearhoof May has been called to serve as co-director for persons in Arizona.
- VII. A committee to review the minutes of the 2002 conference was appointed: Vera Mae Gephart, Paula Stanley, and Lois Brandt.
- VIII. Bill Haldeman-Scarr, Director of Training in Ministry for PSWD, recognized Myrna Wheeler and Reba Herder, who have finished their work in TRIM.

- 1 IX. Carol Vecchio, Co-Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, introduced the members of the
2 Nominating Committee. John Price, Co-Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, presented the
3 candidates for positions on the ballot (pp. 55-60 of the Business Book) and thanked them for their
4 willingness to serve. Doris Dunham, Clerk, read Acts 13:2-3 and led the delegates in a time of
5 meditation and prayer prior to balloting.
6
- 7 X. A motion was made for a unanimous ballot for Moderator-elect, Nominating Committee, Program
8 Committee, Standing Committee Delegate, Hillcrest Homes Board Nominees, District Board
9 Representatives for Arizona, Central California, and Northern California. *M/s/c.* Balloting followed
10 for PSWD Board At Large Representatives. Bill Johnson, Dean Kieffaber, Sara Haldeman-Scarr,
11 and Norma Sexton were elected to the At Large positions.
12
- 13 XI. Sara Haldeman-Scarr, Board Chair, made recognitions for Board members leaving the board at the
14 end of 2002, having completed their term of service. Those recognized were John Keeling, Bubbles
15 Miguel, Valentina Satvedi, Roma Jo Thompson, George Sparks, Lucile Leard, Karen Walters, Art
16 Crane, and Sara Haldeman-Scarr. Each one was presented with a rosebud in appreciation.
17
- 18 XII. Sara Haldeman-Scarr, Board Chair, presented the recommendation that the District recognize the
19 September 1, 2002, vote of the North County congregation to disband. (p. 61 of the Business Book).
20 Eldon Eller from the North County congregation was invited to share remarks with those present.
21 *The recommendation was approved.*
22
- 23 XIII. Sara Haldeman-Scarr, Board Chair, presented the Report on the Calling of District Leadership. She
24 highlighted several significant events that had occurred during the year since last year's conference.
25 She also highlighted the State of the District Report and the Report on the Consultation on PSWD
26 Staffing and Organizational Needs. She explained how the Board proposes to proceed to implement
27 the needed changes. Sara named the Search Committee for the search for a District Executive
28 Minister.
- 29 A. A motion was made to recommend that the Board nominate an additional person to the team
30 of individuals who will be working on the District Executive Minister job description and that
31 Janet Ober be named to that team. *M/s/c.*
- 32 B. A time of expressing statements of concern, statements of validation, asking questions, and
33 receiving answers followed. Clarifications were made in several areas.
34
- 35 XIV. Sara presented the recommendation that District Conference allow the Board to do the work of the
36 District through an alternate commission structure in order to assess the viability of an organizational
37 change. *Approved.* (p. 61 of the Business Book)
38
- 39 XV. Myrna Wheeler, Acting Moderator for 2003, read Acts 18:24-28 to open the time of the Mission
40 Strategy Update.
41
- 42 XVI. Report of the Nurture Commission, presented by Roma Jo Thompson, Commission Chair: Roma
43 Jo introduced two youth who shared briefly of their experiences of attending National Youth
44 Conference this past summer. Over 4,000 youth attended the conference. She also highlighted other
45 activities related to the commission including camps, translation of denominational and church
46 school materials in languages other than English that are needed by our congregations, Deacons
47 Workshop, and introduced the other members of the commission. (written report on pp. 13-14 of the
48 Business Book)

- 1 XVII. Report of the Ministry Commission, presented by Valentina Satvedi, Commission Chair: Valentina
2 introduced Elizabeth Rowan and Karen Walters, who shared briefly on their calls into the set-apart
3 ministry. Valentina introduced the other members of the commission. (written report on pp. 10-13
4 of the Business Book)
5
- 6 XVIII. Report of the Congregational Life Team, Area 5, presented by Jeff Glass: Jeff highlighted some
7 of the ways the Congregational Life Team has worked with PSWD during the past year. R. Jan
8 Thompson and Angela Lehman Yoder, who serve on General Board, shared briefly from the General
9 Board, (written report is attached). Both Jan and Angie asked that people in the district who have
10 concerns or ideas for General Board would share those items with either or both of them. (written
11 report of Congregational Life Team ... p. 8 of the Business Book)
12
- 13 XIX. Report from the Center for Anabaptist Leadership (CAL): Irene Mendoza, Jill Hammer, and Sara
14 Haldeman-Scarr shared about the work that CAL has done with PSWD during the past year. The
15 Glendale, CA, congregation has completed the Counting the Cost program since last year's
16 conference. An inter-anabaptist movement is being worked on in the San Jose area. Other CAL
17 staff members have been present during the weekend. Members of the PSWD who serve as CAL
18 Board members were introduced. Irene Mendoza also provided Spanish language translation many
19 times throughout the weekend.
20
- 21 XX. Action Item related to the Principe de Paz congregation: Sharon Sparks, member of the relationship
22 committee, reported for the committee. She recognized the other members of the committee and
23 introduced the recommendation. Olga and Mario Solano, pastors, and other members of the
24 congregation were introduced.
25 A. Based on the report of the evaluation committee the Board recommends District Conference
26 approve congregational status for Principe de Paz. *Affirmed.* (p. 61 of the Business Book)
27 B. Sara Haldeman-Scarr, Board Chair, presented a basin and towel to the congregation,
28 representing the traditions and ordinances of the Church of the Brethren. Pastor Mario
29 responded on behalf of the congregation.
30
- 31 XXI. Report from the Peace and Justice Center: Don Mitchell, PSWD Board member and member of the
32 Imperial Heights congregation, shared and reported on the activities of the Peace and Justice Center.
33 This operates as a drop-in center and safe place for the community surrounding the Imperial Heights
34 church. He expressed appreciation to the district, its churches, and members for their support of the
35 center.
36
- 37 XXII. Action item related to the USA taking military action against the country of Iraq: The La Verne
38 congregation presented a letter to President Bush asking that he and other national leaders ***not take***
39 ***military action against the country of Iraq.*** A motion was made to amend, as a friendly
40 amendment, the first paragraph to rephrase the first paragraph as a positive statement. *Affirmed*
41 (The letter, as amended, is an attachment to these minutes.)
42
- 43 XXIII. Report of the Stewards Commission: Richard Downhour, Commission Chairperson, reported on
44 behalf of the Commission. (written report on p. 15 of the Business Book) He made explanatory
45 remarks related to the financial position of the district. He also recognized the work of the Treasurer,
46 Assistant Treasurer, and other members of the Commission.
47
48

- 1 XXIV. Budget for 2003: Richard Downhour, Stewards Commission Chairper-son, introduced the
 2 proposed budget for 2003. (pp. 48-52)
- 3 A. A motion was made to return the budget to the district board with authorization to run a
 4 \$50,000 deficit for 2003, with the first priority being accomplishing the Mission Strategy. The
 5 district board is further directed to return to next year's district conference with a multi-year
 6 business plan, which includes mission goals and how they will be financed. *M/s/failed.*
- 7 B. The action on the budget as originally proposed was to adopt the budget as proposed. *Passed.*
 8
- 9 XXV. A motion was made to suspend the rest of the business to share, hear, and listen to stories about real
 10 issues, about how folks ... God's people in this district are engaged in mission and ministry. *M/s/c.*
 11
- 12 ● An Open-microphone session followed. Bob Morris thanked the district for the Ministry Support
 13 grant the Glendora Church received. He gave some details about how their program is going. He
 14 also announced that the Glendora Church will celebrate its 100th anniversary on November 3rd.
 15
 - 16 ● Richard Hart, Interim District Executive, recognized several pastors on anniversaries in ministry and
 17 those who have passed away during the past year. (p. 5 of the Business Book)
 18
 - 19 ● Bob Keim, pastor, shared about the youth activities in Tucson. He also shared that they received
 20 more than 35 members into their congregation during the past year.
 21
 - 22 ● Karen Walters, Standing Committee Delegate, reported that nominating for denominational ballot
 23 needs to be done soon. She has the necessary forms. A list of Annual Conference Agency Prayer
 24 Concerns and PSWD Prayer Concerns was distributed and is an attachment to the minutes.
 25 (Standing Committee Delegate's written report on p. 6 of the Business Book)
 26
 - 27 ● Esther Ho reported that Fellowship in Christ, Fremont, that they had taken action to affirm that all
 28 work for peace needs to be undergirded with prayer. They work actively to urge people in their
 29 community to buy creative toys rather than action toys.
 30
 - 31 ● John Gingrich reported from the University of La Verne, that the university continues to deal with
 32 the relationship with the church and the district.
 33
 - 34 ● Bob Gross, representing On Earth Peace, talked about the programs they have available and the work
 35 they do. He recognized that several persons from PSWD serve on their board and in groups related
 36 to them. He encouraged congregations to call On Earth Peace if there is any way the organization
 37 can be helpful to them. (written report on p. 20)
 38
 - 39 ● Jeff Glass, Area 5 Congregational Life Team member, reported that a few weeks ago the Laton
 40 congregation celebrated its 100th anniversary.
 41
 - 42 ● Lowell Flory reported for Bethany Seminary. There is a 2:1 ratio between churches seeking pastors
 43 and pastors available to provide leadership. The seminary is dealing with change in order to meet
 44 the needs of the denomination. (written report on pp. 22-23)
 45
 - 46 ● Joe Schechter reported for Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC). ABC continues to need
 47 financial support from congregations. (written report on pp. 26-27 of the Business Book)
 48

- 1 ● Myrna Wheeler, Chaplain of Hillcrest Homes, reminded those present to read the Hillcrest Homes
2 written report. (pp. 18-19 of the Business Book)
3
4 ● Milton Ewert, editor of “*Life and Witness*”, requested that churches send their newsletters to him,
5 and that others send him items that would be of interest to the entire district.
6
7 ● Myrna Wheeler, Acting Moderator for 2003, thanked George Sparks for the work he has done on
8 behalf of the Pacific Southwest District. She presented a gift of a jar to him in recognition of work
9 and leadership.

10

11 XXVI. A motion was made to accept all reports. *M/s/c*

12

13 XXVII. The La Verne congregation was recognized for the number of years that this congregation has
14 provided space for the district office. A gift of \$200 was given for the church library. The gift was
15 received by Lena Coffman, church librarian, and Susan Boyer, pastor.

16

17 XXVIII. A service of Commissioning and Anointing followed.

18 Honorary Moderator, Bill Wagoner

19 Acting Moderator, Myrna Wheeler

20 Moderator-elect, David Hurlbut

21 Search Committee and Board Members

22

23 XXIX. The business meeting was adjourned.

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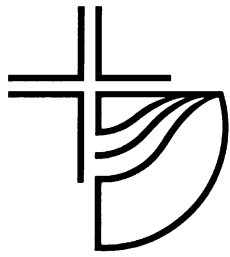
27 Minutes recorded by Doris Dunham, PSWD Clerk.

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29 Minutes reviewed by: Lois Brandt, chair; Paula Stanley; and Vera Mae Gephart

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Pacific
Southwest
District

Church of the Brethren

October 5, 2002

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush,

We, the delegates of the District Conference of the Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren (an historic peace church), meeting in La Verne, CA, October 4-6, 2002, call upon you and other national leaders to refrain from taking military action against the country of Iraq, and instead to employ diplomacy, peacemaking strategies, and humanitarian action toward the people of Iraq.

With you, we grieve the violent loss of human life. With you, we yearn for greater peace. However, we cannot support war as a solution. Violence breeds more violence. War causes further destruction, fosters hate, and increases brokenness. As stated in our denominational statement on war, we believe that "good citizenship extends beyond our own national boundaries and will there serve to remove the occasions of war." We deplore violence as a way of solving problems, and believe it is an uncreative and devastating response.

We plead for peaceful restraint because military intervention in Iraq would surely inflame anti-American passions and breed more violence that will in fact weaken our security at home and in the world. Acting unilaterally without the United Nations support seems irresponsible and contrary to security and peace.

Therefore, we call upon you, our national leader, to take seriously our voice along with the many voices that do not support a war against Iraq. This is a time when the wisdom of many must be sought in order to create successful solutions.

Please understand that United States military action will not be taken in our name or with our support.

We send this in the name of Jesus, who lived with bold compassion and compassionate justice.

Delegates of the Church of the Brethren
Pacific Southwest District

The Pacific Southwest District supports the life, growth, and witness of Church of the Brethren congregations within its boundaries, for the building up of the body of Christ, through nurturing its congregations toward healing and wholeness, consciously lifting up joys and sharing in pains of its members and congregations, building inter-congregational and denominational relationships, within the faithful witness of Scripture, recognizing that the statements of Annual Conference reflect the consensus of our larger community of faith.

(Some Scriptures that undergird and direct the above thinking are: Ephesians 4:11-16; Galatians 6:1-10; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12; Matthew 5-7; Luke 15; and John 15.)

District Conference, 1996

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