Minutes of the
Fifty-Fourth Annual District Conference
Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren

November 11, 2017

I. Call to Order
The 2017 Pacific Southwest District Conference was called to order by Moderator Sara Haldeman-Scarr at 8:32 a.m. and prayer was offered. The delegates were given assigned tables to sit at and were invited to get to know each other and consider the tables a place of hospitality.

II. Introductions
Moderator Sara introduced those at the front which included: Nelda Rhoades Clark, Board Chair; Karen Pierson, Moderator-Elect; Karen Cosner, Clerk; Clark Youngblood, Time Keeper; Eric Bishop, Parliamentarian; Russ Matteson, District Executive Minister; and Virginia Stark, pianist.

III. Roll Call and Verification of Quorum
The clerk verified that we have 65 delegates in attendance representing 21 of our 25 congregations to confirm that we have a quorum and can conduct the business of the Pacific Southwest District at this 54th District Conference.

IV. Approval of Agenda
Motion to accept Agenda, Donna McAvoy (Live Oak)/Janet Short (Pomona Fellowship), Passed.

V. Approval of Minutes of 2016
A. Motion to approve 2016 Minutes, Sabrina Stern (San Diego)/Mike Fletcher (La Verne), Passed.
B. The following persons volunteered to certify the accuracy of the 2017 Minutes: Phil Corr (Church of the Living Savior), Richard Keeling (Bakersfield), and Richard Hart (Pomona Fellowship).

VI. Delegate Dedication
Delegates’ Dedication Litany and Hymn of Affirmation, from page 6 of the Business Book.

Table Conversation: Bible Study, Sara Haldeman-Scarr
Based on Matthew 5:1-16. Sara asked the attendees to share a personal story based on a story of Jesus and using lengths of play dough, weave the stories together. She closed the session by sharing that an amazingly beautiful tapestry is made and that God is working through our diversity. She then went around the room and smashed the tapestries that were made and shared that smashing can create another tapestry.

A. The meeting was opened for nominations from the floor.
B. Seeing none, a motion was made to close the ballot, Jeff Glass (Modesto)/Phil Corr (Church of the Living Savior), passed.
C. A motion was made to move the ballot, Luella Cole (Modesto)/Tom Hostetler (La Verne), passed.
D. The following persons were elected to the PSWD 2018 positions:
   1. Moderator-Elect: Bob Morris (Glendora)
   2. Nominating Committee: Lucile Leard (Glendale)
3. Program Committee:
   a. Cady Laycook (South Bay)
   b. Peggy Redman (Pomona Fellowship)

4. Standing Committee
   a. Representative: Don Shankster (Papago Buttes)
   b. Alternate: Sara Haldeman-Scarr (San Diego)

5. District Board of Administration:
   a. Mario Cabrera (Príncipe de Paz), Youth & Young Adult Representative
   b. Jaime Farrar (Modesto), Youth & Young Adult Representative
   c. Elizabeth Piazza (Live Oak), Youth & Young Adult Representative
   d. David Flores (Cristo Sion), At-Large Representative
   e. Norma Sexton (Prince of Peace), At-Large Representative
   f. Joanne Wagoner (La Verne), At-Large Representative
   g. Julia Wheeler (La Verne), At-Large Representative
   h. Joel Price (Empire), Northern CA Representative
   i. Cindy Badell-Slaughter (Glendale) Southern CA West Representative

VIII. Introduction of Guests
Russ Matteson, District Executive Minister, introduced guests Nevin Dulabaum, Brethren Benefit Trust President; Jeff Carter, Bethany Theological Seminary President; Lori Current, Bethany Executive Director for Admissions & Student Services; Jay Wittmeyer, Brethren Inc. Executive Director, Global Mission and Service; Thomas Dowdy, PSWD representative on the Ministry and Mission Board; Erin Gratz, On Earth Peace Board Member; Julie Wheeler, University of La Verne Director of Church & Interfaith Relations; Zandra Wagner, University of La Verne Chaplain; Kamal Abu-Shamsieh, an international leader in Islamic chaplaincy.

Later in the day, Matthew Neeley, Hillcrest President & CEO, was introduced and shared greetings as our Hillcrest host, where residents are: dreamers, servers and quiet builders.

IX. Reports From Annual Conference Agencies (written reports on pages 33-43 of the Business Book) A video was shown representing all five agencies: On Earth Peace, Bethany Theological Seminary, Brethren Inc., Brethren Benefit Trust, and Annual Conference. Each year two agencies are present and give a live report, this year’s reports were from:
   A. On Earth Peace: Board Member Erin Gratz expressed her gratitude for the District’s support and shared that OEP has 5 permanent staff members.
   B. Brethren Benefit Trust: President Nevin Dulabaum shared the ways that BBT relates to socially responsible investments (Brethren Value Investments). They invest in third world developing companies. They don’t invest in drugs or guns. They have a community development plan which invests in inner city projects and they look to boards that have ethnic and gender mix, etc.

X. Church Planting Task Force Report
The members are: Mike Fletcher (La Verne), Rudy Amaya (Príncipe de Paz), Donna Welch (La Verne), Jeff Glass (Modesto), and Robert Aguirre (Cornerstone). They are encouraging congregations to dream and follow up on their dreams. Their mission is to: Empower, Support, and Train.

New project Príncipe de Paz Los Banos. Russ introduced Pastors Becky and Richard Zapata of Príncipe de Paz in Santa Ana, who introduced the leadership couple in Los Banos Rigo and Margie Berumen. Moderator Sara led in a prayer of thanksgiving for the new church plant.
XI. **Policy Board Report**

A. Board Chair Nelda Rhoades Clarke reported: On April 29, 2017 the Policy Board accepted the PSWD Objective – “A Circle of Support” (found on page 25 of the Business Book) which contains “Core Objective – Supporting congregations in being vital and healthy communities of faith that embody and share distinctive Brethren ways of Christian belief and action.” The nine areas of PSWD focus include the responsibility of helping congregations build inter-cultural ministry and relationships.

B. Update: The Lindsay “New Harvest” congregation will be closing and PSWD will sell the facility to another congregation.

C. Update: The Korea church property will have an offer to sell by the end of the year.

D. Ministry Commission chair Tom Hostetler shared that there have been over 12 persons interested in a licensed ministry. The commission approved 2 ordinations. There are 75 ordained and commissioned ministers in PSWD. Gilbert Romero was hired as Ministry Training Coordinator. In 2018 all pastors and their spouses are invited to a retreat to be held in Malibu. The commission believes all pastors deserve support and encouragement from the District.


**Table Conversation:** The attendees were asked to discuss three questions:

1. What is happening in the District that you heard, that was interesting to you and why?
2. What would you like to know more about in the PSWD and the work of the Policy Board?
3. Where might you have gifts to share or want to get involved with the PSWD?


A. The Policy Board recommends to District Conference the adoption of the proposed 2018 budget as presented. Passed.

B. The Policy Board recommends to District Conference that the Operating Expense maximum for the 2019 budget be $446,000. Passed.

XIII. **Program Committee Report:** Printed on page 17 of the Business book.

XIV. **Brethren Disaster Report:** Dot Hess presented a slide show.

XV. **Standing Committee Report**

Marlin Heckman shared that each district is allowed 1 delegate for every 5000 members. This year there were 36 delegates for Standing Committee. All items of business are reviewed by the standing committee. Change of Polity requires 2/3 vote of the membership. There were four items of new business, two were continued to next year because Annual Conference did not have time to get to them. It is important that we continue to remind the rest of the church that we here in the West exist and are a part of the body.

XVI. **District Executive Minister Report:** Printed on pages 11-13 of the Business book.

Russ introduced persons in new pastoral leadership within the district, including: Dawna Welch is the new full time Spiritual Formation Minister for the La Verne congregation. Randy Short is the new minister for Glendale, Mike Fletcher is the Interim at Modesto. Southern Ohio District Executive Minister David Shetler is working with Modesto in the search for a new pastor. Russ is working with Bakersfield in the search for a new pastor. Russ introduced Gilbert Romero as the new Ministry Training Coordinator for the District, and shared that Erik Brummett has been serving as the interim District Youth Advisor. In September the District Office moved from Hillcrest to office space at the Pomona Fellowship church facility to lower the cost of office rent.
XVII. Congregational Vitality Task Group
See “Ministry Partnership Funds” on page 12 in the Business Book. A video featuring Church of the Living Savior (McFarland), Modesto, and Glendale, talking about the work they had done with their Ministry Partnership Funds was shared. Seven different congregations have received partnership funds over the last two years.

XVIII. Reports
Motion to accept the reports with appreciation for all the work. Thomas Dowdy (Imperial Heights)/Jody Romero (Restoration LA) Passed.

Table Conversation:
What have you learned in your insight sessions or during the business and reports of the District?

XIX. Announcements
A. Thank you to the tellers, Gary and Rae Stern.
B. The Policy Board will meet at 8:00am Sunday morning.
C. Please return at 5:30 for Love Feast.
   1. The Service Project will be in the main room after Love Feast.
   2. The Campfire will take place following the Love Feast outside the entrance to the Meeting House.

XX. Passing the Gavel
Sara Haldeman-Scarr thanked the conference for supporting her and having fun and passed the gavel to Moderator Karen Pierson encouraging her to have the Joy of Faith, the Wisdom of God and the Blessing of Courage.

XXI. Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Karen Cosner, Clerk

In June 2018 the draft copy of the minutes was examined and given preliminary approval by the committee: Phil Corr (Church of the Living Savior), Richard Keeling (Bakersfield), and Richard Hart (Pomona Fellowship).