

1 **Minutes of the**
2 **Fifty-Fifth Annual District Conference**
3 **Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren**

4 **November 10, 2018**

Hillcrest, La Verne, California

5 **I. Call to Order**

- 6 ● The 2018 Pacific Southwest District Conference was called to order by Moderator Karen B.
7 Pierson at 8:40 a.m.
8 ● District Executive Minister Russ Matteson shared information about the Camp Fire in Northern
9 California; in the first 10 hours it was blown into Paradise, California. Pastor Melvin Campbell
10 has relocated to Chico; the fire destroyed the church and parsonage. Being aware of the loss and
11 pain in our body we offered prayers.
12 ● A prayer was offered for the delegates and our meeting.

13 **II. Verification of Quorum**

14 The clerk verified that we have 77 delegates in attendance representing 21 of our 25 congregations
15 to confirm that we have a quorum and can conduct the business of the Pacific Southwest District at
16 this 55th District Conference.

17 **III. Delegate Dedication**

18 Moderator Karen introduced a reflection activity. A short film in which Don Davis shared his story
19 was followed by a time of sharing personal stories of when God has used us for His purpose without
20 our knowing. The Delegates' Dedication Litany was recited, from page 7 of the 2018 Business Book.

21 **IV. Introductions**

22 Moderator Karen introduced Bob Morris, Moderator-Elect; Nelda Rhoades Clarke, Board Chair; Sara
23 Davis, Substitute Clerk; Norma Morris, Time Keeper; Eric Bishop, Parliamentarian; Russ Matteson,
24 District Executive Minister.

25 **V. Approval of Agenda**

26 **Page 3 of the 2018 Business Book, accepted as published.**

27 **VI. Approval of Minutes**

- 28 A. **The minutes of the 2017 meeting, page 46 - 49 of the 2018 Business Book, as reviewed and**
29 **found to be accurate were moved to acceptance by Eddie Hernandez of Modesto, seconded**
30 **by Linda Lovelace of Pomona Fellowship; passed.**
31 B. The following persons volunteered to certify the accuracy of the 2018 Minutes: Phil Corr
32 (Church of the Living Savior, McFarland), Richard Hart (Pomona Fellowship), Lois Frantz
33 (Empire).

34 **VII. Business Item: Election of Leadership, from page 51 of the 2018 Business Book.**

- 35 A. The Moderator asked for nominations from the floor. There were none.
36 B. **Sara Haldeman-Scarr, San Diego, moved that the delegates accept the ballot as a slate**
37 **M/S/C.**
38 C. **The motion to move the ballot was M/S/C.**
39 D. The following persons were elected to the PSWD 2019 positions:
40 1. Moderator-Elect: Mary Kay Ogden, La Verne
41 2. Clerk: Karen Cosner, Modesto
42 3. Nominating Committee: Susan Price, Empire

- 1 4. Program Committee, District Conference:
- 2 a. Robert Aguirre, Glendora
- 3 b. Karleen Daniels, Modesto
- 4 5. District Board of Administration:
- 5 a. Mario Cabrera, Principe de Paz, Youth & Young Adult Representative
- 6 b. Olivia Celedon, Bakersfield, Youth & Young Adult Representative
- 7 c. Elizabeth Piazza, Live Oak, Youth & Young Adult Representative
- 8 d. Christi Bowman, Church of the Living Savior, At-Large Representative
- 9 e. Jamie Farrar, Modesto, At-Large Representative
- 10 f. Jonas Funderburk, Glendale, At-Large Representative
- 11 g. Nelda Clarke, Tucson, Arizona Representative
- 12 h. Richard Keeling, Bakersfield, Central CA Representative

13 **VIII. Introduction of Guests and recognition of Ordination Anniversaries**

- 14 A. Russ Matteson introduced Pastor Luz Roman and her husband Orlando Roman. Luz is our
- 15 church planting pastor at the Nevada church Iglesia Cristiana Elohim; the church plant was
- 16 recognized in January, Luz was licensed in June and will begin training next year. PSWD was
- 17 able to support the congregation with a van and other equipment. Additional support is coming
- 18 from our church planting commission. Luz addressed the delegates in Spanish with Orlando
- 19 translating. She shared her story of her call to ministry: Luz had offered to clean a church in
- 20 Boston when she first came to the US where she became a leader for the Spanish speaking
- 21 congregation. When the minister departed he asked her to assume responsibility for the church.
- 22 She, herself, was then called to Las Vegas where she reached out to people she knows in the
- 23 COB for support and affiliation. The COB relationship led to our support of the church planting
- 24 in Las Vegas. Bob Morris offered a prayer of blessing in both Spanish and English.
- 25 B. Following a break, the delegates were welcomed by Shirley Turner, Hillcrest.
- 26 C. Prayer was offered for Thousand Oaks dealing with an active fire.
- 27 D. Carl Beckwith, SERRV, shared the story of COB in the early 40's working with the Sales
- 28 Exchange for Refugee Relocation. SERRV has a shop at Hillcrest during our conference.
- 29 E. Brother Russ made further introductions and welcomed guests:
 - 30 ● David Steele, General Secretary
 - 31 ● Josh Brockway, Director, Spiritual Life and Discipleship
 - 32 ● Thomas Dowdy, Mission and Ministry Board
 - 33 ● Steve Mason, Director of Brethren Foundation
 - 34 ● Kesla Klinger, Bethany Theological Seminary Admissions
 - 35 ● Eric Bishop, Bethany Board
 - 36 ● Iris Oseguera, translator simultaneous
 - 37 ● Alan McLearn-Montz, new Bakersfield pastor
 - 38 ● Annali Topf, interim pastor Glendale, member of Pasadena
 - 39 ● Lauren Seganos Cohen, incoming Pastor Pomona Fellowship
- 40 F. Ordination anniversaries were recognized by Ministry Commission Chair Tom Hostetler
- 41 (La Verne), see page 14 of the 2018 Business Book. Ministers came forward for a presentation
- 42 of a certificate of service. Brother Tom led us in prayer.

43 **IX. Reports From Annual Conference Agencies** (See pages 34-45 of the 2018 Business Book)

- 44 A. David Steele, General Secretary, shared the ministry report from four agencies along with a
- 45 video report about the Church of the Brethren, Bethany, Brethren Benefit Trust and On Earth
- 46 Peace. The video shared our vision for a global church, and described us as a community of
- 47 believers coming together to work to embody Christ. Bethany highlighted their practical engage-
- 48 ment of hearts and hands. BBT financial services is rooted in Brethren values. OEP provides
- 49 training and support in conflict resolution, transformation, non-violence, Christian peacemaking.

- 1 B. Brethren Inc.: Brother David also shared that the Mission and Ministry Board is working to
 2 refresh the website and is in prayer with the Paradise community where Disaster Ministries is
 3 available to help. He shared that Dan McFadden of BVS resigned following almost 23 years of
 4 service. The Board is actively working to fill his position and would appreciate applicants. He
 5 noted the Discipleship Ministries, Christian Citizenship Seminar, National Older Adult's
 6 Conference, Mission work in Nigeria and other efforts being made by the Board and staff.
- 7 C. Bethany Theological Seminary: Kesla Klinger brought greetings from Jeff Carter, President of
 8 Bethany. Sister Kesla shared that she grew up in the COB in Indiana and participated in the
 9 Indiana Boys and Girls club. She informed us that Bethany Chapel services are shared on
 10 YouTube.

11 **X. Business Item: Action to Disorganize the New Harvest Lindsay Church of the Brethren**
 12 (See page 60 of the 2018 Business Book)

- 13 A. Sister Dot Hess rose to introduce this action item from the Policy Board. Sara Haldeman-Scarr,
 14 San Diego, asked a question answered by Russ Matteson, as a matter of polity churches, are
 15 "organized" and, so, they are not closed but "disorganized."
- 16 B. **The motion to Disorganize the New Harvest Lindsay Church of the Brethren did not need
 17 a second and passed unanimously.**
- 18 C. Brother Russ, lead the group in a prayer of appreciation for the Lindsay Congregation. The
 19 congregation had maintained an olive orchard since it's founding and donated the proceeds to
 20 the mission work of the denomination. The congregation, organized for 107 years, has a deep
 21 and rich legacy.

22 **XI. Business Item: Amendment to PSWD Constitution** (See page 60 of the 2018 Business Book)

- 23 A. **By Policy Board recommendation, formally add Nevada in the PSWD. No discussion; all
 24 in favor, none opposed.**

25 **PSWD Constitution**

26 **Article I. Name and Boundaries**

27 The name of this corporation is "Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the
 28 Brethren" (hereinafter "the District"). From 1964 to 1990 the corporation was named Pacific
 29 Southwest Conference, which was created from a consolidation in 1964 of the two
 30 corporations titled Northern California District of the Church of the Brethren and the District
 31 of Southern California and Arizona.

32 Pacific Southwest District embraces all of the congregations of the Church of the
 33 Brethren in Arizona, California, and Nevada and any additional area which may be properly
 34 designated by the District Conference and approved by the Standing Committee of Annual
 35 Conference.

36 **XII. Ministry Commission Report**: Chair Tom Hostetler (See pages 22-23 of the 2018 Business Book)

- 37 A. Mercedes Zapata, Príncipe de Paz, was Ordained!
- 38 B. Brother Tom said that there continues to be many persons interested in ministry; more than a
 39 dozen have expressed interest in licensing.
- 40 C. Brother Tom recognized Gilbert Romero, Russ Matteson and Joe Vecchio for their support of
 41 the Ministry Commission and the district. The delegates responded with a standing ovation.

42 **XIII. Stewards Commission Report**: Chair Joel Price (See pages 23-26 of the 2018 Business Book)

- 43 A. Brother Joel reviewed the financial report on page 23-26 of the 2018 Business Book,
 44 highlighting the need to find a church meeting location in Las Vegas and Los Banos, as well as
 45 holding onto the church in Waterford. The financial report received a "presents fairly" audit
 46 opinion. There were no questions.

1 **XIV. Business Item: Policy Board Budget Recommendations**

2 A. The 2019 Operating Budget and the 2019 Church Planting Support Budget was presented, see
3 Exhibit C, on pages 56 - 59 of the 2018 Business Book. The anticipated deficit is in line with
4 2016 goals. The Church planting budget supports the objectives of the Policy Board. Discussion
5 followed. Linda Davis, Church of the Living Savior (McFarland), commended the hard work
6 of the Board and Commission to be sustainable, “the Board did a little more stewardship rather
7 than just claiming that promise” that God will provide.

8 **The Policy Board recommends to the District Conference the adoption of the 2019**
9 **Operating Budget and the 2019 Church Planting Support Budget as presented. Passed by**
10 **voice vote.**

11 B. The 2020 Policy Board Recommendation regarding expense maximum, on page 57 of the 2018
12 Business Book. The action proposes to raise the expense maximum by \$4,000 over 2019 to
13 \$450,000. Pastor Phil Corr, McFarland, questioned the limit in the case of an emergency.
14 Brother Russ answered that if conditions changed, the board could come to District Conference
15 with a proposal.

16 **The Policy Board recommends to the District Conference that the expense maximum**
17 **for the 2020 Operating Budget be \$450,000. Passed by unanimous voice vote.**

18 **XV. Program Committee Report:** See page 17 of the 2018 Business Book, Sister Karen made an appeal
19 for evaluations and reminded delegates that next year we will be in Arizona.

20 **XVI. Standing Committee Report** (See page 16 of the 2018 Business Book)

21 Representative, Don Shankster, Papago Buttes, is the PSWD Standing Committee delegate. The
22 current focus on vision and process attempts to get away from the divisions in the church. The
23 Denomination has not accepted the PSWD unity statement, not recognizing how it might help them.
24 Division brings problems to our denomination. There are eight churches in Michigan that want to
25 form a District based on ideology, not geography. This group sent a delegate to Standing Committee
26 to be “recognized.” The delegate was present for all meetings. Recognition was not given, however,
27 “we have no way to recognize districts based on ideology, only geography.” The Officers instructed
28 the Michigan group that they would need to put forth a query to allow ideological districts.

29 Brother Don explained that Standing Committee has time to talk amongst themselves and that
30 the smaller group allows the church to bridge differences and unify. Next year we go to Greensboro
31 N. Carolina, “a one building operation.” Next year the work on a compelling vision will be a big part
32 of AC, no new business. 2020 will be in Grand Rapids.

33 Standing Committee also forms the Nominating Committee for denominational leadership
34 elected by the Annual Conference. Brother Don is on the Nominating Committee. He made an
35 appeal for nominations. OEP, Bethany BBT boards, need people. You cannot nominate yourself.

36 Pastor Phil Corr, Church of the Living Savior (McFarland), from the floor, asked for further
37 elucidation of the Michigan split. General Secretary, David Steele attempted to address the question.
38 He doesn’t know. We haven’t heard much from them. They are serviced by a temporary part time
39 District Executive.

40 Sister Linda Williams, San Diego, asked a follow up question: Has anyone suggested the
41 Ministry of Reconciliation process for them. Brother David will pass that on to their DE.

42 Brother Oren Scala, San Diego, asked for clarity on the Unity Statement comment? Brother
43 Don said, “It hasn’t ever been introduced to the Denomination.” It was approved by this District but
44 not the Denomination.

1 **XVII. District Executive Minister Report:** (See pages 11-15 of the 2018 Business Book)
 2 Brother Russ offered words of encouragement for all our churches and his prayers for us and our
 3 focus on Jesus. He is thankful for the pastors that serve our churches. In addition to the passing of
 4 Bob Keim, having served 70 yrs in ordained ministry, and Randy Short who died after a year at the
 5 Glendale Church, Ralph Click and Marlin Heckman passed away this year. Pastor Margie Berumen,
 6 Los Banos, came through cancer surgery well but was not able to be at our District Conference. Russ
 7 shared that 75% of pastors in our denomination are part time or bi-vocational, and how we do a
 8 better job supporting these pastors is a key question. Church of the Brethren has received a
 9 Lilly Foundation grant of 1 million dollars to work on how to support a “Part time pastor with a full
 10 time church.”

11 **Table Conversation:** Moderator Karen B. Pierson
 12 The Moderator shared a statement describing her experience being Moderator. The Moderator then
 13 invited the delegates to share with each other for 20 minutes about their experience here at district
 14 conference.

15 **XVIII. Passing the Gavel**
 16 Sister Karen passed the gavel to moderator elect Brother Bob Morris who expressed his appreciation
 17 for the call and for Karen’s service. The delegates expressed their appreciating with a standing
 18 ovation.

19 **XIX. Announcements**
 20 Sister Mary Kay announced that worship at 7 p.m. would be in this room, we should pay no attention
 21 to the camp fire and chairs set up for story-telling outside. After worship this evening, the center
 22 pieces are available to take home. All were invited to the 9:30 a.m. worship at La Verne Church the
 23 next day.

24 **XX. Adjournment**
 25 The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

26 _____
 27 Minutes recorded by Sara Davis, substitute clerk

28 _____

29 In May 2019 the draft copy of the minutes was examined and given preliminary approval by the committee:
 30 Phil Corr (Church of the Living Savior, McFarland), Richard Hart (Pomona Fellowship), Lois Frantz
 31 (Empire).