

**MINUTES OF THE SIXTY-FIFTH CONSTITUENCY SESSION
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS**

September 22, 2019

**WHITE MEMORIAL SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
401 North State Street, Los Angeles, California 90033
DEVOTIONAL SERVICE**

OPENING

The Sixty-fifth Constituency Session of the Southern California Conference (SCC) began at 7:55 a.m. when Elder Velino A. Salazar, president and session chair, recognized and thanked all the delegates for their presence. Some of them woke up as early as 3:00 a.m. to be at this 65th Constituency Session on time, coming as far as Ridgecrest and Santa Barbara, California, while others, coming just from a few miles or a couple of blocks from here. All were officially welcomed as he recalled the Summer of 1901, 118 years ago, when the Southern California Conference was established. The large California Conference was split in two; Northern and Southern. And now, after 118 years, we have four large conferences just in California, praise God for such growth.

The platform participants were introduced like Dr. Harold Crook, Superintendent of Schools (SCC); Elder James G. Lee, Vice-President (SCC); Orville Ortiz, Treasurer (SCC); Elder John H. Cress, Secretary (SCC); Janet Corbin, Berean Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church and Carol Matsuda, Central Japanese-American Community SDA church, including Elder Dan Jackson, President of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists and Elder Ricardo Graham, President of the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Some of the participants' spouses were present, and they were introduced to the delegates.

SCRIPTURE READING AND PRAYER

Ms. Carol Matsuda led the responsive reading from Hymnal #705, while all delegates followed by reading the bold print. All joined together with the opening hymn, and after singing it, Ms. Janet Corbin prayed.

SPECIAL MUSIC

A mass choir, composed of 151 students from our SCC Academy Choirs, sung four inspiring songs (*Good News, Chariot's Comin, In this Very Room, Ave Verum, and He is Exalted*) conducted by each of their music directors (Jonathan Pontel, Suny Lopez, Sheen Sanchez, and Sheri Hansen). This choir was the largest group ever participating in an SCC Constituency Session. Elder Salazar took the opportunity to thank the students, parents, and academy leadership for coming to worship with these delegates.

DEVOTIONAL

Elder Daniel Jackson, President of the North American Division, praised God for the young people as well, saying, "they are a gift from God to the church. They are not the church of the future but the church today". He asked those not as youthful as these students, to steward to them. "If we push them away, the Bible says that it would be better to take a millstone and be hung around our necks and be dropped into the bottom of the ocean."

He reminded us of Jesus' promise through the apostle Paul that He, who has begun a good work in us, will complete it until the coming of the Son of Man. Our work begins and ends when we lift Jesus up to others, and talk about His beauty and His magnificence, men and women will be drawn to Him.

SEASON OF PRAYER

Dr. Israel Olaore, SCC Prayer Ministry member, in response to the Gospel message from Elder Dan Jackson, led the congregation into a season of prayer, and singing "How Great Thou Art" then he asked to find a prayer partner and thank God for Jesus. He noted that everyone thanks God for Christ who has washed our sins away because of His blood. Everyone was then asked to find a prayer partner and thank Jesus for His gift of righteousness.

SPECIAL GUESTS

Elder Salazar recognized a select group of delegates and guests who are members of the executive committees of either the North American Division or the Pacific Union Conference, who per SCC Bylaws constitute them delegates at-large.

BUSINESS SESSION

READING OF THE OFFICIAL CALL

Elder John H. Cress, Southern California Conference secretary, read the official call of the session, which was published in the June, July, and August 2019 issues of the *Pacific Union Recorder*, as required by the Bylaws of the Southern California Conference. **(Appendix A)**

SEATING OF THE DELEGATES

The conference secretary reported to the session chair that 566 regular delegates registered that morning, which exceeded the 60 percent (560) of the regular delegates (934) to transact business, as required by the Conference Bylaws. (A list of delegates present at the session is on file in the office of the conference secretary). **(Appendix B)**

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The session chair declared the session officially opened as determined per SCC Bylaws that more than 60 percent of the 934 eligible regular delegates, or more than the required 560 regular delegates. There were 566 regular delegates present, including delegates at large, having a total of 779 delegates present.

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was present to transact the business of the 65th Constituency Session as required by the Bylaws of the Southern California Conference

SEATING OF THE PARLIAMENTARIANS

VOTED To accept the recommendation of the Conference Executive Committee to invite attorneys Karen
01-19 La Madrid, Harold Cleveland, and Duane Montgomery to serve as the session parliamentarians.

READING OF CONSTITUENCY SESSION RULES AND PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES

Duane Montgomery, leading parliamentarian, provided instructions regarding the constituency session rules and the parliamentary procedures governing the session using the *Robert's Rules of Order* newly revised version. Attorney La Madrid and Cleveland will be assisting delegate with questions regarding procedures, how to word a motion, or the proper way to approach with concerns. **(Appendixes C, D)**

VOTED To accept the recommendation of the Conference Executive Committee to adopt the session rules
02-19 and parliamentary procedures to conduct this constituency session as presented and clarified by the parliamentarians.

REPORTING A NEW CONGREGATIONS WITH "COMPANY" STATUS

Elder John H. Cress reported that the Los Angeles Cantonese Company was organized on August 12, 2017; Light Above Company was organized on March 17, 2018; and International Adventist Company was organized on September 22, 2018.

REPORTING CONGREGATION WITH COMPANY STATUS TO CHURCH STATUS

Elder John H. Cress reported that The Place Adventist Fellowship, the largest company in SCC with a membership of 435 was organized as a Church on August 24, 2019.

VOTED to accept The Place Seventh-day Adventist Fellowship church into the sisterhood of churches.
03-19

REPORTING CONGREGATIONS WITH NAME CHANGE

Elder John H. Cress reported that during the last four years the following congregations changed their name: New Hope Community Watts to New Hope Community; Maranata Norwalk Spanish to Adonai; Lighthouse Community to Kaleo; L.A. Central City to Living Hope; Santa Barbara Bilingual to Santa Barbara Spanish, Canoga Park Spanish to Los Olivos Spanish; Long Beach Freeman Spanish to Long Beach Spanish, and Mojave to High Desert.

REPORTING COMPANIES DISSOLVED

Elder John H. Cress reported that Moorpark SDA Company was dissolved as a company on February 28, 2017, yet it remains as a group under the Simi Valley SDA church. The Silver Lake Spanish Company was dissolved on October 23, 2018. The Pomona SDA church was dissolved, and the group merged with the Journey SDA church.

RATIFICATION OF THE SIXTY-FOURTH SESSION MINUTES

VOTED To ratify the Minutes of the May 17, 2015 Sixty-Fourth Constituency Session as approved by the
04-19 Southern California Conference Executive Committee at its meeting on May 21, 2019. (*Appendix E*)

AMENDING THE AGENDA FOR THE SIXTY-FIFTH CONSTITUENCY SESSION

VOTED It was moved and seconded to amend the session agenda content to switch the order between
05-19 the Bylaws Committee Report and the Nominating Committee Report.

AGENDA FOR THE SIXTY-FIFTH CONSTITUENCY SESSION

VOTED To approve the following agenda for the session as recommended by the Conference Executive
06-19 Committee at its meeting on September 10, 2019, including today's amended items.

- A. Devotional
- B. Preliminary Business Items
 - 1. Reading of the Official Call
 - 2. Seating of Delegates
 - 3. Declaration of a Quorum/Opening of the 65th Session
 - 4. Seating of Parliamentarians
 - 5. Instructions of Parliamentarians
 - 6. Sixty-fourth Constituency Session Minutes
 - 7. Sixty-fifth Constituency Session Agenda
 - 8. Recognitions
- C. Session Reports
 - 1. Officers' Combined Report (Video Presentation)
 - 2. Conference Finances Audit Report
 - 3. AdHoc Committee's Report
 - 4. Project Reports
- D. Advance Committees' Reports
 - 1. Nominating Committee Report
 - 2. Bylaws Committee Report

E. Embracing Our Future

F. Adjournment

REMEMBRANCE OF DECEASED

The session chair paid tribute to SCC employees who died while serving in ministry as well as those in retirement, including Pastor Harland Lloyd Daley, who recently passed away in Costa Rica. After a power-point presentation with their picture and name, the delegation was asked to stand for a minute of silence, giving respect to those church members and employees who passed away during this last quadrennium.

(Appendix F)

RECOGNITION FOR RETIREES

The delegates were invited to pay tribute to 68 denominational workers who served in this conference and retired during the last quadrennium; their names were shown on the screen with applause. *(Appendix G)*

ADVENTIST HEALTH

Before presenting the guests from Adventist Health, an audio-visual regarding the work of this Adventist entity was presented. Then Elder Velino A. Salazar gave a brief history on the medical mission in Los Angeles; he mentioned that in early 1906, the Southern California Conference opened the first hospital in our territory, the Glendale Sanitarium, and later in 1913, the White Memorial clinic opened its doors. In the 1960s, a group of Adventist physicians wanted to carry on the mission in Simi Valley, so they opened a clinic and small hospital.

Elder Salazar welcomed and introduced Andrew Jahn, Adventist Health Southern California Region President; Jennifer Swenson, Adventist Health Simi Valley Hospital President; John Raffoul, Adventist Health White Memorial President; and Alice Issai, Adventist Health Glendale President. He mentioned that it is a privilege to work with these individuals who are committed to the Seventh-day Adventist message and carry on this mission in our territory. They are ministers of healing in the church and part of our collective mission. He thanked them for the ministry they lead in our area.

OFFICERS COMBINED REPORTS

Instead of each of the SCC officers, the President, the Secretary, the Vice President, Superintendent of Schools, and the Treasurer reporting through individual presentations, a combined video report was shown. The session chair expressed appreciation to the producers of the video: Lauren Lacson, Araya Moss, and Iki Taimi. This video was an in-house production.

AUDITED CONSOLIDATED COMBINED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018

Ms. Joy Alabat, representing the General Conference Auditing Services (GCAS) gave the report of the Audited Consolidated Financial Statements of the Southern California Conference for the years ending December 31, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018. Ms. Alabat gave a brief background of the four types of reports that GCAS issues after a financial audit. The highest one is called the “Unqualified” opinion. This opinion is issued when an auditor determines that each of the financial records provided by the organization is free of any misrepresentations. In addition, it indicates that the financial records have been maintained in accordance with the standards known as Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). Therefore, for the years ended December 31, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018, GCAS was pleased to report that the Southern California Conference has attained the highest opinion given to an organization, which is a clean opinion.

Voted 07-19 To approve the Audited Consolidated Financial Statements of the Southern California Conference for the years ending December 31, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018, as presented. This audit report is labeled as “unqualified” which means be in compliance with denominational policy. **(Appendix H)**

NEWBURY PARK PROJECT

A video report was presented to inform about the long-time Newbury Park Project. Elder Velino A. Salazar informed that the former Ventura Estates site was finally sold in March 2017. He communicated that the loans that SCC had with the General Conference at that time have been paid off. He also reported about this project **Ad-Hoc Committee** recommendations to speed up the process to conclude this project. He recognized and expressed gratitude to the individuals who were involved guiding the officers with their expertise and time to close this sale, and they are Roy Brasher, Duane Montgomery, Aaron Ramirez, Norman Sacro, Leonard Somdahl and Warren Tetz. Such a video is in the SCC Session website. **(Appendix I)**

VOTE 08-19 to accept the Newbury Park Project report as presented.

SENIOR AND YOUNG ADULT AD-HOC COMMITTEE REPORT

This committee met in the fall of 2015 and recommended to establish a department and elect a director to lead the Senior Youth and Young Adult ministry in SCC. Elder Salazar reported that now the SCC has a full-time Director for the Senior Youth-Young Adult Ministries.

REGION STRUCTURE AD-HOC COMMITTEE REPORT

This committee met a few times; however, it feels more time is needed to do a comprehensive analysis of the current Region Structure. Although some challenges were found, there are many opportunities for joined collaboration between regions across the SCC. **(Appendix J)**

VOTE 09-19 that SCC conducts a comprehensive Region Structure Assessment and bring analysis and report at a special session of the Constituency in 24 months.

SCHOLL CANYON RETIREMENT CENTER

Information on the Scholl Canyon Retirement Center can be found on the SCC Session website. The earnings of this project are presently being reinvested in this joint venture. **(Appendix K)**

LUNCHTIME DELAYED

It was moved and seconded that the meeting continues with the nominating committee report versus stepping out for lunch break.

VOTED That the proposed motion be adopted.
10-19

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The chairing of the session was turned over to Elder Ricardo Graham, Pacific Union Conference president, who per the SCC Bylaws, chaired the SCC Session Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee comprised with the following individuals was introduced: Paul Cho, Dennis Imai, Angelina Regoso, Ira Barksdale, Cassandra Hudson-Johnson, Deborah Fountain, Lorena Piedra, Brenda Garcia, Cindy Negrete, Ellis Flores, Mario Negrete, Jr., Richard Guy, Ronda Harrison, Grecia Benitez-Campos, Jesus Noland, Daniel Dik, Nurul Santosa, Jillian Lutes, Cheri Dawson, Riva Robinson, Jr. Elder Ricardo Graham thanked them and asked the congregation to applaud for their excellent service. He also thanked Elder John H. Cress for the preparation of the informational packets.

In their first meeting on Sunday, July 28, the committee was advised about the importance of confidentiality, which is embedded in the bylaws while speaking to the work of the Nominating Committee. Richard Guy was selected as the recording secretary for the Nominating Committee. During its second meeting, all nominations were completed and a report was released per SCC Bylaws.

At its third meeting, the Nominating Committee met and received delegates who wanted to speak to the report that had been previously released, particularly about the position of the Superintendent of Schools. A final report was then sent to all delegates on September 9th. The Nominating Committee met one last time on the evening of Saturday, September 21, 2019.

VOTED To accept the recommendation of the nominating committee to elect the following persons to serve **11-19** as Executive Officers and the Superintendent of Schools for the 2019-2024 quinquennial:

President	Velino A. Salazar	652 ayes	97 nays
Secretary	John H. Cress	729 ayes	56 nays
Treasurer	Orville Ortiz	697 ayes	99 nays
Vice President	James G. Lee	702 ayes	89 nays
Superintendent of Schools	Harold A. Crook	526 ayes	229 nays

VOTED To approve the recommendation of the Nominating Committee that the following persons serve as
12-19 members of the Conference Executive Committee for the 2019-2024 quinquennium:

Administrative Members

President
Secretary
Treasurer
Vice President
Superintendent of Schools
Region Directors:
Asian Pacific Region
Greater Los Angeles Region
Hispanic Region
Los Angeles Metro Region
West Region

Non-Administrative Members

Asian Pacific Region (3)

Patricia Hokama
Paul "Fu Sheng" Cho (Pastor)
Norman Sacro

Central Japanese-American Church
Chino Valley Chinese Church
Pasadena Church

Greater Los Angeles Region (4)

Sonja Starks
Deborah Fountain
Jonathan Taylor
Adolphus Garnett (Pastor)

Compton Community Church
Tamarind Avenue Church
New Hope Adventist Church
Fifty-Four Street Church

Hispanic Region (6)

Lorena Piedra
Maurin Paz
Natanael Caballero
Heleodoro Garcia
Cindy Negrete
Ruby Meneses

Glendora Spanish Church
El-Shaddai Spanish Church
Baldwin Park Bilingual Church
Central Spanish Church
Monrovia Spanish Church
Lincoln Heights Spanish Church

Los Angeles Metro Region (5)

Christina Ceballos
Sandra Schultz
Jillian Lutes (Pastor)
Jon De La Paz
Melody Cardenas

Alhambra Church
Glendale City Church
West Covina Adventist Church
Temple City English Church
Living Stones Church

West Region (3)

Michael Stevenson (Pastor)	Santa Clarita Church
Laura Uhl	Santa Barbara Church
Neville Salvador	Hollywood Church

Voted 13-19 To approve the recommendation of the Nominating Committee that the following persons serve as members of the Bylaws Committee for the 2019-2024 quinquennium:

<u>Region</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Church</u>
Asian Pacific	Dennis Imai Johmy Fajilan	Gardena Japanese American Glendale Filipino
Greater L.A.	Greer Bosworth David Love	Breath of Life Ephesus
L.A. Metro	Rogelio Paquini Daniel Dik	West Covina Hills Alhambra
West	Richard Roethler Richard Guy	Santa Monica Santa Clarita
Hispanic	Daniel Castañaza Paul Negrete*	Adonai Church Monrovia Spanish

* Returning committee members

ACT OF DEDICATION

The newly elected conference leaders with their spouses were invited to the platform. The spouses of the newly elected leaders were presented with bouquets, after which Pastor Jan White, member of the prayer ministry for the SCC, asked Pastor Mabel Duncan to offer a prayer for the newly elected leaders and their spouses. Elder Ricardo Graham also prayed for this recently elected administrative team.

BYLAWS COMMITTEE REPORT

Attorney George Sellers and Elder Javier Elenes, Bylaws Committee chairperson and secretary respectively, introduced the Bylaws Committee members. At that time, they stood up and were applauded by the delegation for their dedication and exceptional work.

George Sellers said that recommendations would be presented by groups of paragraphs on a related subject. If anyone had a comment to make, this should happen after a motion is made, so the delegate particularizes the paragraph number being referred to.

GROUP 1 – Changes in Titles and Duties in Officers, Committees:

6.1 Officers

- 6.2.1 – *President* – the duty of signing and countersign documents was clarified.
- 6.2.2 – *Secretary* - title changed to executive secretary.
- 6.2.3 – *Treasurer* – the duty of signing and countersigning documents required by this office, was added.
- 6.2.4 – *Vice President* - title changed to executive vice president.
- 6.2.5 – *Superintendent of Schools* - title changed to vice president of education.

2.2 Title Church Administrator was removed from the entire document.

- 2.2.2 – *Title of church administrator* - deleted.
- 2.2.4 – *Title of church administrator* - deleted.
- 12.19.2 – *Title of church administrator* - deleted.

7.3 Asset/Risk Management Director

- 7.3 – *Director's duties* - expanded to sign certain documents pertaining to this office.
(8.3 – this former paragraph was deleted.)
(8.3.3 – the wording of this paragraph was inserted into paragraph 7.3.)

8.2 Budget and Finance Committee

- 8.2.1 – *Membership* - was expanded from eighteen to nineteen, changing the source of members slightly, by adding one more member from the educational work.
- 8.2.2 – *Audit and Review Committee* - membership and work were clarified.

8.3 Committee Governance

- 8.3.1 – *Establishment of committees* – its scope was broadened.
- 8.3.4 – *Committees Lay Membership* – paragraph added, allowing local churches to submit names to their respective region director for consideration.

VOTED to adopt the recommendations from the Bylaws Committee on the changes of Group 1 as presented.
14-19

GROUP 2 – Changes in Calendar of Schedules:

4.1 Regular Sessions

- 4.1 – *Frequency* - change the time between sessions from four years to five years.

3. Pre-Session Procedures – if a five-year term is adopted, timing will change the following events:

- 3.1 – *Pre-Session Committee* – will start no later than twelve weeks prior to the session.
- 3.2 – *Nominating Committee* – will commence its work not later than ten weeks, and complete its work not later than four weeks prior to the session.

3.2.4 – *Nominating Committee Report* – delegates may bring comments to this committee not less than fourteen days prior to the session.

3.3.4 – *Session Report Town Halls* – will happen not later than three weeks prior to the regular session, after announcing the date of the town halls not later than six weeks prior to the session.

8.1.1 – *Bylaws Committee Organization* – shall be not later than three years following the regular session.

8.1.2 – *Proposal for Amendments* - shall be announced at least twelve weeks prior to a regular session with time and place for submitting written proposals for review and consideration for amendments.

8.1.3 – *Report Proposed Amendments* – shall be submitted to the executive committee not later than eight weeks prior to the session.

(NOTED: this adoption would align the term of the Region Directors automatically to five years as well.)

VOTED to adopt the recommendations from the Bylaws Committee on the changes of Group 2 as presented.
15-19

GROUP 3 – Delegates and Quorum

2.2 Regular Delegates

2.2 – *Ratio* – change the ratio of regular delegates from 1/50 to 1/75.

4.5 Voting and Quorum

4.5.1 – *Quorum* – clarify that quorum still sixty percent of

VOTED to adopt the recommendations from the Bylaws Committee on the changes of Group 3 as presented.
16-19

GROUP 4 – General Provisions

4 and 12 Notices

4.3 – *Notice for regular and special sessions* – Notice of the regular session shall be published no less than six months prior to the session and shall be republished each month thereafter up to and including the month preceding the regular session. Notice of a special session shall be published no less than thirty (30) days prior to the session.

12.19.b – *Electronic Means* – this was reworded to clarify without any substantial change.

VOTED to adopt the recommendations from the Bylaws Committee on the changes of Group 4 as presented.
17-19

GROUP 5 – General Provisions

12. Miscellaneous Changes

12.4 – *Indemnification* – these terms were adopted from the North American Division policy.

12.20 – *Permanent Records* – this section was revised to clarify what specific records need to be recorded and who is responsible for doing it.

VOTED to adopt the recommendations from the Bylaws Committee on the changes of Group 5 as presented.
18-19

VOTED to authorize necessary edition of these bylaws with non-substantial changes and after such edition
19-19 and updating paragraphs, table of contents, and page numbering, then be submitted to the Executive Secretary for certification.

CLOSING REMARKS

Elder Velino A. Salazar, newly elected Conference president, shared a three-minute video regarding the new conference leadership vision for the next quinquennial.

ADJOURNMENT

VOTED To adjourn the Sixty-fifth Constituency Session of the Southern California Conference.
20-19

The benediction was offered by Ms. Nancy Danelson, Principal of the Ridgecrest Adventist School.

Velino A. Salazar, Chair
John H. Cress, Secretary