

1023-3 Cal-Pac Annual Conference

June 17, 2023

I request from Bishop Escobedo-Frank a ruling of law (par. 2609.5) concerning her ruling that my motion (see below) was out of order based on Judicial Council Decisions 1420, 1457 and 1458. I ask, is this a correct reading of those decisions? And further, does this ruling, if overturned, but too late for churches to conclude disaffiliating from the California-Pacific Annual Conference by December 31, 2023 mean that the deadline to disaffiliate using par. 2553 of the Book of Discipline (2016/2019j) can and/or will be extended beyond the expiration of par. 2553?

Here is my motion, made on the floor of the Annual Conference on Friday, June 16, 2023:

I move that the California-Pacific Annual Conference instructs the Conference Board of Trustees to negotiate with disaffiliating churches in the conference for the purpose of arriving at a more equitable and reasonable formula for disaffiliation than the current Guidelines specify. And that specifically, the Trustees consider reducing substantially the 50% of property value currently required of local churches which have voted to disaffiliate. And that these negotiations conclude no later than October 1, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glen Haworth". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and "H".

Rev. Glen Haworth, Elder

BEFORE THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**DECISION OF LAW
OF
BISHOP DOTTIE ESCOBEDO-FRANK
CALIFORNIA-PACIFIC ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

I. Statement of Facts

On Friday, June 16, 2023, during the afternoon session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference, Rev. Glen Haworth, a clergy member, made the following motion:

“I move that the California-Pacific Annual Conference instructs the Conference Board of Trustees to negotiate with disaffiliating churches in the conference for the purpose of arriving at a more equitable and reasonable formula for disaffiliation than the current Guidelines specify. And that specifically, the Trustees consider reducing substantially the 50% of property value currently required of local churches which have voted to disaffiliate. And that these negotiations conclude no later than October 1, 2023.”

The motion was seconded, and Rev. Haworth made the following statement:

“The requirement to pay 50% of the property value closes the door on all of the churches. My church has 50 members and the property is valued at \$6M. The 50 people in the church would have to come up with \$3M, which is \$60,000 per member. It is impossible. We cannot get a mortgage loan. The payments on that would be \$26,000 per month. I ask this Conference to nudge the Trustees to negotiate. So we can worship in the way we think is right.”

Bishop Escobedo-Frank, presiding officer at the session, ruled the motion out order with the following rationale:

“I wanted to let you both speak and to share. I rule this out of order according to the Book of Discipline, Judicial Council Decisions 1420, 1457 and 1458. The Conference Board of Trustees have made their decision and we are going to continue with the disaffiliation process as it stands in Paragraph 2553.4.”

Rev. Haworth: “Does this Conference not elect the Board of Trustees?”

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: “Yes”

Rev. Haworth: “Conference has authority over the Board of Trustees.”

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: “This is not the place for the discussion. If you want to talk with me on the side with the Trustees, this is not the place. You have opened up something that I believe we should stop and pray for a moment for those churches who have these decisions to make.”

The bishop then led the body in prayer.

The following day, on Saturday, June 17, during the afternoon plenary session, Rev. Glen Haworth, clergy member, requested a ruling of law on the following question:

“I want to request a ruling of law from you, Bishop referencing 2609.5 - concerning your ruling yesterday on my motion that it was out of order based on Judicial Council decisions 1420, 1457 and 1458. I ask, is this a correct reading of those decisions? And further, does this ruling, if overturned, but too late for churches to conclude disaffiliating from the Cal-Pac Conference by December 31, 2023, mean that the deadline to disaffiliate using paragraph 2553 of the Book of Discipline can and/or will be extended beyond the expiration of paragraph 2553?”

Then the bishop responded that she received this as a request for decision of law and had thirty days to make a ruling and submit it to the Judicial Council for review.

II. Analysis and Rationale

The Rev. Glen Haworth asked the bishop to rule on her previous parliamentary ruling. There was no properly presented question of law here. The *Book of Discipline* is clear in stating that bishops can rule only “upon questions of law submitted to them in writing in the regular business of a session.” ¶ 2609.6 (emphasis added).

Parliamentary matters do not constitute questions of law under said provision. In Memorandum 1475, the Judicial Council defined parliamentary matters as “matters [that] pertain to the order, organization, agenda, and decision-making procedures of an annual or jurisdictional conference.” See also JCD 898, 941, 1117, 1131, 1252.

Instructive is also Memorandum 1474, in which the Judicial Council stated: “In a long line of cases the Judicial Council has held that when a bishop rules that a matter is out of order, the same is a parliamentary ruling. The Judicial Council does not affirm or overturn parliamentary rulings of bishops. The Judicial Council has specifically held that it does not have jurisdiction over such matters” (emphasis added). See also Memorandum 1439.

“There is no disciplinary authority for the Judicial Council to assume jurisdiction of a parliamentary ruling by a presiding bishop.” Memorandum 1474. See also Memoranda 898, 941, 1117, 1187, 1205, and 1356.

III. Ruling

I rule that the request directly relates to a parliamentary ruling and does not qualify as a “question of law” within the meaning of ¶ 2609.6 and the cited cases. Therefore, the Judicial Council lacks jurisdiction in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: June 23, 2023

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

U.M. Daily

Friday, June 16, 2023

39th Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference
Morning Worship - Nourished by Memory
9:00 a.m. (PDT)

Opening Music: Slow Down by Chuck Girard El Dorado, LA First Band

Gathering Pastor Molly Lorden

Scripture: Matthew 17:1-5 Sam Ang S bong and Henry Carrasco

Opening Prayer Pastor Christina Lee

Poem: "An Anthology of Rain" by Phillis Levin Pastor Molly Lorden

Remembrance: "On Eagle's Wings," UMH 143 El Dorado UMC & LA First UMC Band

A video was shown as we remember and honor the California-Pacific Annual Conference clergy members and their spouses who have passed away.

Libation Ceremony Deborah Bass and Michael Mitchell

The ceremony of honoring all who have passed on before us, that they may offer us their wisdom, courage, and love. The water poured now holds the love, faithfulness, and reverence for God that we honor, and will be used to baptize Shea Cameron-Robert Donaldson.

Baptism of Shea Cameron-Robert Donaldson Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

Introduction to the Service
Presentation of Candidate Shea Cameron-Robert Donaldson
Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith
Thanksgiving Over the Water
Baptism with Laying on of Hands

Remembrance of Baptism Practice Pastor Molly Lorden

Retirement Videos (3)

Rev. George Martzen - 26 years of service

Rev. Dave Conrad - 27 years of service

Rev. Cathleen Coots - 40 years of service

**39th Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference
Session 3
10:00 AM (PDT)**

Call to Order - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

Bishop Escobedo-Frank welcomed the body. Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared that Rev. Adiel de Pano requested a moment of privilege to share that Rev. Emilito Hernandez, a member of the Cal-Pac Conference, has been in a coma for two weeks.

Rev. Adiel came forward and offered prayer for Rev. Emelito's recovery.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank recognized and thanked the Conference Staff for all their hard work. She shared that it is Margaret Iriwin's birthday! She asked that we all greet her and wish her a happy birthday. Bishop Escobedo-Frank called this session to order.

Orders of the Day - Rev. Cathie Capp

Rev. Capp put the Orders of the Day before the body. Rev. Capp moved the Orders of the Day.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Rev. Capp put the order of the afternoon's plenary before the body.

RULES 23-02 - Cabinet Expense Account Policies

RULES 23-03 - Local Church Clergy Expenses

RES 23-02 - Identifying and Opposing Apartheid in the Holy Land

REC 23-06 - Sale of Camp Colby

REC 23-05 - Advance Specials

REC 23-07 - Conference Hispanic Committee Strategic Plan

Announcements - Rev. Won-Seok Yuh

Rev. Yuh greeted the body, and thanked everyone for the care we have shown one another by picking up our trash and honoring exit paths. He reminded the body there are cards still available to write a message of hope to those being helped by the Border Ministries. They may be mailed to Calexico UMC.

Rev. Yuh reminded the body to be mindful of the amount of noise during the Conference proceedings. The Conference is grateful for the gathering's patience with the internet, and acknowledged that we have had delays and issues in accessing the internet.

Legislation has been printed and posted in the ballroom for the in-person gathered body. The Nominations biographies have been gathered, and they are on calpacumc.org/ac2023 and are posted in the ballroom. Rev. Yuh shared that updates to the legislation which will be addressed in this afternoon's plenary session can be found on the calpacumc.org/AC2023 website:

Retirement Videos

Videos were again shown honoring the retirees:

Rev. George Martzen - 26 years of service

CCORR - Anti-Racism - Rev. Lily Villamin and CCORR - Dr. Larry Hygh, Jr.

Dr. Larry Hygh, Jr., lay person of Hollywood UMC, introduces the conversation series Real Talk, which this morning centers around moving the conference's commitment to anti-racism forward.

Rev. Lily Villamon begins by providing a synopsis of how CCORR started: In 2020, in response to the murder of George Floyd and numerous incidents of racial violence, our Annual Conference passed resolution 20-06 called Strategic Plan For Racial Equity, initially drafted and co-authored by Rachel Gibson and Pastor Mandy McDow. This led to the establishment of the Conference Commission on Religion and Race (CCORR) in September 2020. A \$50,000 contract was made with Dr. Magaela Bethune to conduct an audit from 2021 through the end of 2022. The audit includes:

1. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis focusing on the work of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.
2. The Council of Finance and Administration
3. The Conference Cabinet

The analytical framework examines historical equity in terms of identity and racial representation, as well as conducts listening sessions with emphasis on mental health. In 2021, a following resolution expanded the work of CCORR and presented a budget of \$250,000 over the next 5 years. The resolution passed a 95% approval rate.

Rev. Dr. Kristen Sonkyo Oh, an ordained clergy in this Annual Conference, professor of Practical Theology at Azusa Pacific University, and liaison in United Methodist Churches at Fuller Theological Seminary discussed the challenges that come with trying to dismantle institutional racism within systems like the Cal-Pac and other institutions of any size. Some points that were shared were the discomfort that comes with addressing racism and the physical and spiritual exhaustion of the work that CCORR does. Despite the challenges, the mandate for racial justice is a gospel imperative.

Rev. Dr. Christopher Carter also emphasizes how emotionally and physically taxing the CCORR work is, and that this leads to burnout, exhaustion and frustration. He reiterates that the data collected will make people uncomfortable, but is not anything that any of us should be surprised by. He goes on to thank

everyone who has worked at CCORR for all of their work, without which CCORR wouldn't be where they are today.

Those in the room who have done work for CCORR were asked to stand and were applauded.

Dr. Magaela Bethune is invited to speak. She begins by stating that as the lead consultant for the racial equity audit, it was important to her to broaden the framework early on in the project. One of the first things that she presented in her proposal was a broadening of the scope of the work, not only to include a sort of systematic audit of existing data, but also to have an equity-oriented frame whereby we engage in centering the community voice and voices of people who are impacted. She broadened the scope of analysis to include community listening sessions, out of which CCORR created a set of preliminary themes through listening to the narratives and stories of those impacted by racism in the Conference and in the world. Dr. Bethune presents cross-cutting themes that have implications for all of us across the Conference. The themes are clergy-focused, but have downstream impacts on the laity and in the communities that we outreach to.

The themes are talked about as follows:

1. The complexities and challenges across racial and cross-cultural appointments.
2. The disparities that we see in clergy salary at intersections of race, ethnicity and gender.
3. The administration and awarding of congregational grants.
4. Ongoing trauma, the true spirit of what gets in between church, us, and Jesus Christ.

Rev. Lily Villamon reads from The Discipline to accurately define cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments, and emphasizes the area in the definition that clearly states that both the clergy person and the congregation involved shall be provided specific training.

Dr. Bethune shares that the data shows there is not an intentionally constructed and structured database that qualitatively and comprehensively shows how cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are decided upon, how they are ultimately implemented, what the reasons are for them, or seasons they might be applied. Dr. Bethune triangulated a set of insights from the existing data by looking at the change in demographics of congregations. There are multiple configurations of leadership whereby moving into a cross-racial or multi-racial space may still mean that a congregation is white-led. It also often means anecdotally that the person - who may be a person of color - in an appointment still reflects the institutional practices, governance structures, and ways of fellowship or worship that mimic or that are adjacent to a Eurocentric frame. This is not something that can be found in a numerical data set, which is one of the important reasons for engaging in a community listening session structure and equity-oriented approach. This elicits stories and informs an analytic approach. For example, a cross-racial or cross-cultural appointment dynamic, one or two years out, will allow us to see if the ethnic demographics of that church shifted to match the new clergy person, or if the church was discontinued or merged with another congregation. Dr. Bethune recommends that there be

an intentional data set created that qualitatively helps us understand these dynamics, the reasons, the outcomes, and implications for clergy and for laity as well.

Rev. Jennifer Gaylord states that we can draw some conclusions from the data that exists now, such as the current composition of the Conference in which there are only a few churches in each category that are defined as “Black,” “Pacific Islander,” or “Hispanic.” This heavily limits opportunities for clergy people of color to work within their own communities. This is just one context of the systemic racism within the Conference.

Dr. Larry Hygh, Jr. invites Rev. Dr. Anthony Boger to speak. Rev. Dr. Boger has served in a number of many different ministry contexts, but each and every one of them has been in the area of cross-cultural or cross-racial appointments. The question, “Can we have association without assimilation?” was raised, as well as, “Can we agree that we don’t have to look alike or be alike in order to worship together? Or to share the same space? Or to come into the presence of God?”

Rev. Dr. Boger shares that the difficulty in growing and working in a cross-racial appointment is our unwillingness to listen to each others’ truth. By listening to one another we will learn to appreciate the journey that God has given to each one of us.

The second theme is moved forward. Dr. Bethune states that we have data of obvious racial and ethnic disparities, but what we haven’t analyzed at this point are upstream contributing factors to why these disparities exist. Dr. Bethune highlights that across any sort of analytic frame that she could have applied to do as much justice to the data as possible, Pacific Islander clergy made standard deviations less than any other clergy racial-ethnic subgroup in the conference – this is an area that should be immediately addressed. Some of the upstream factors that are believed to be very plausible include the fact that there are many different clergy types: Elders or deacons, local pastors, full-time, part-time, years of service, geographical locations, and costs of living - which heavily impacts the application of salary. When we look at race, gender and ethnic intersections, we get a clearer picture of the disparities that exist. When adding gender, we see that women lag behind men in almost every group. Dr. Bethune clarifies that there is not yet enough data on nonbinary people because it is a newer construct in recent years. She recommends there be a more intensive salary study concluded that takes into account other contributing factors where there are also racial and ethnic disparities.

Rev. Dr. Christopher Carter clarifies that nonbinary is not a new category - but only a new category for us to track.

Rev. Lupita Alonso-Redondo shares that some of the churches that she has been assigned to have not been able to give her a fair salary because they were struggling financially. The question is raised of whether other clergy people would accept those appointments with those salary packages, and why she was given those appointments as a Latina woman. Rev. Alonso-Redondo emphasizes that she is following the path of God and that salary does not impede her path because God provides, but that there is a noticeable disparity

between clergy persons and salaries within the Conference. We promote justice, but justice has to start with us.

Rev. Dr. Kirsten Sonkyo Oh shares the concept of the “double consciousness,” by W.E.B. Du Bois in the early 1900’s, in which people of color are conscious of both themselves and what other people think of them. Rev. Dr. Oh states that there are intersectionalities that come with that as well, and that women of color have a “triple consciousness,” of being female in predominantly male-dominated roles as clergy. On top of that, women of color with differently abled bodies add a fourth layer of consciousness which we have to be aware of when discussing disparities of salary and treatment.

Rev. Jennifer Gaylord shares that limited resources of churches affect salary packages, but that the Conference offers different kinds of grant programs in an effort to correct this. Of the 103 grants that were given in 2016-2022, only two Pacific Islander churches received grants for a total of 2% of the disbursed funds, and four grants for 8% went to Hispanic churches. What we don’t know is why the rest of the churches of color are not applying and how we can help them resource those funds and opportunities better.

Dr. Larry Hygh, Jr. calls us to move forward to the third theme, which is ongoing trauma.

Rev. Dr. Christopher Carter begins by sharing that one of the best ways for us to think about race and racialization is from the perspective of trauma and a trauma-informed approach. He has argued in his own work and research that it is best for us to see the application of race-thinking as a traumatic action that impacts us all. White supremacy is ultimately a trauma to the entire biotic community and a root cause of so much structural evil that we try to confront in America.

In order for “race” to become a lasting binary, white people first had to disconnect from their roots and native lands, adopting an overarching identity that was “white.” Rev. Dr. Carter states that this distancing from the self is a kind of trauma that allows one to dehumanize another because they are already distancing themselves from what they know to be true within themselves. For you to adopt this identity, it requires a delinking from your own personhood. This allows the application of the identity of racial-ethnic categories that we now call “people of color” onto others, therefore leading to the kind of traumas that we see as the implication and application of those kinds of designations that have therefore led to dehumanization, often theologically underpinned.

We must never forget that the genocide of indigenous communities, slavery, and segregation were all - and continue to be - justified theologically. This comes from a traumatic, colonial understanding and misinterpretation of the gospel. We have to collectively understand and unearth the traumas and traumatic retentions that we carry so that we may begin to heal ourselves inwardly.

Dr. Bethune offered last remarks, reiterating that CCORR broadened their work as much as possible in order to center the community voice. The task before us is to take these insights and recommendations and

produce action informed by this work that will infiltrate every congregation, every ministry, every piece of outreach, and every step we take that is in discipleship with Christ.

Rev. Lupita Alonso-Redondo offered 4 recommendations:

1. Meet with key leadership groups throughout the conference to address the concerns that came out of this audit.
2. A more in-depth salary study.
3. Initiate an intentional process of healing throughout the Conference, whereby new relational bonds are formed, confessions repented, structural reparations are made, and spiritual liberations happen.
4. To create a fully-funded position with sufficient independence and authority to provide support and accountability and to invest intentionally in healing and restoration.

Dr. Bethune shares the last two charges that she would like to speak on:

1. Not another Annual Conference where this Conference can say that there is not a Native American designated church, that doesn't recognize the members and the constituency served at Native American UMC.
2. Not another loss of a Black church.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank offered a time of prayer.

SAI/UMC Scholarship - Bob Arvizu - Media Team

A video was shown on the Spanish American Institute / United Methodist Church Scholarship. Incorporated in 1909, SAI Gardena Industrial School opened in 1913. More than 2,400 young men were housed, trained, educated and cared for in a safe, Christian environment. In the early 1970's, the school was closed due to regulatory and financial burdens. Today, SAI's mission of serving the Hispanic youth who strive for a better life through higher education continues.

Budget Preparation (Priorities) - Archana Carey & Erin Hawkins Smith

Dr. Larry Hygh, Jr. of Harmony Toluca Lake UMC talked about challenges and opportunities we have as we create a budget to support our collective future ministry.

A panel consisting of Archana Carey; Rev. Allison Mark; Rev. Sandra Olewine; Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes; Rev. John Woodall; and Dr. Larry Hygh, Jr. was present to lead the discussion on Budget Preparations.

Rev. Sandra Olewine: We heard from Erin Hawkins Smith and in videos show, that in spite of all the challenges and issues about racial inequality, we have churches who are doing amazing work. God is greater than our problems and roadblocks, and God is still at work. In the South District, we have congregations who have received new members, show new vitality, and have large confirmation classes. They are connecting with communities in new ways, and finding partnerships. They are beginning to rethink how we use property through affordable housing. Rethinking how we leverage our biggest assets, which is exciting. Doing mission work by coming alongside our migrants. Across the South District, people are doing ministries that are saving lives, feeding and housing, welcoming and supporting. There are challenges

coming out of Covid. We are challenged by the sustainability of congregations and how we fund ministry. We wonder how they are able to deal with buildings and the expenses of old buildings. We witness increased conflict in our congregations - stressors of tension between pastors and staff, congregations and community, and it is taking a toll. We look at the questions of health care and housing for clergy. Local churches can no longer sustain these things anymore. Housing and healthcare alone can run \$80,000 a year, and that is before anything else, not even salaries. When salaries and expenses are no longer sustainable, churches move to less than full time appointments. This becomes an intertwined reality of struggle and hardship.

Rev. Allison Mark - We do feel the tension in many of our churches. We have to figure out how to adapt to not only welcome, but to hold onto traditions. Sometimes we don't want to be as open as we say we are. The "either/or" is killing us. Congregations lament losing younger people and families and along with them, the energy to actually do ministry. They are walking away because they don't want to participate in the politics of the local church. I celebrate churches and leaders who trust their pastors to make decisions outside of the box. Otherwise, if we tend to ourselves, it will be the end of our churches.

Are we struggling because we are trying to maintain the status quo and not allowing a bigger vision to emerge? Is this true for our Conference as well? Are we ready to invest in it? I yearn for our Conference and churches to invest in something new and maintain the best of what already exists ... and let the rest go.

A poll was opened with this question: What 1-2 words best describe what we as a conference should let go of in order to best resource ministry and increase our sustainability?

A word cloud was formed from the answers of the congregation
Main words: Fear, pride, old status quo, tradition

Rev. John Woodall shared that he was in the local church for 35 years before moving to Foundation work. The prevailing thought during his time in the local church was that the future would be glorious. The minor course corrections started to become bigger until we realized we don't even have a map. We are no longer in a place where tinkering is going to be the solution. We have to have an honest and important discussion that we cannot sustain who we are in the way and fashion we used to see it. Is that something we even want to sustain? We have a difficult time in being willing to let go and give it to God, even if it doesn't serve us moving forward. The rules of the game have changed and tinkering is no longer going to get us there.

Dr. Larry Hygh, Jr. shared that there is great work being done around the Conference.

A poll was opened with this question: What 1-2 words best describe what we as a conference should keep in order to best resource ministry and increase our sustainability?

A word cloud was formed from the answers of the congregation.
Main words: Love, hope, faith, Jesus, grace

Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes shared that all of these describe our local churches, but shift how we think about local churches. We need to change to places of mission, based on Matthew 25. There is now a LGBTQ service center in the middle of Compton which provides services - churches are working together to create those ministries. We are turning towards places of service, where we worship, and where stuff is happening every day which reflects the work of Jesus and following in his steps in our communities.

Dr. Larry Hygh, Jr. asked, “How do we fund this?”

Archana Carey, Treasurer, Executive Director of Finance & Facilities, shared the Budget Synopsis.

Revenue/ Source of Income

1. Apportionment: \$10 Million
2. Direct billing to local churches
 - Pension \$4 Million
 - Health \$3 Million
 - 3 Property and Liability \$6 Million (coverage for property valuing \$1.8 Billion)
3. Camping \$2.5 Million
4. Investment Drawdown - governed by boards/committees
5. Reserve Funds - governed by boards/committees

Expenses

1. Apportionments:
 - General Church - \$2.4M
 - Jurisdiction - \$76K
 - Annual Conference \$7.6M
2. GCFA subsidizes Episcopal Area Office expenses with \$80K grant
3. Billing: The administrative fee offsets operating expenses for HR office
4. Investment Drawdowns: no set amount; governed by boards/committees/investment guidelines
5. Reserve Funds: Funds are used as needed.

% Allocation of Budget: Apportionment and Non-Apportionment

A pie chart was shown which reflected Apportionment at 39% and Property; Liability Billing at 23%; Pension Billing at 16%; Health Billing at 12%; and Camping at 10%

Restricted Funds

These funds are set aside for a particular purpose as a result of designated giving
They are permanently restricted to that purpose and cannot be used for other expenses
Restricted funds are created when a donor wants the money to go to:

- A specific program or
- Be utilized after a specific time or event.

Donors alone can direct the usage of these assets.

The Top 4 Facts You Should Know About the Conference's Finances

1. Conference is financially stable - uninterrupted positive cash flow
2. Unqualified “clean” audit report since 2012
3. The reserve funds are actually there ...and not on paper
4. Setting missional priorities is key to projecting an effective budget

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Colossians 3:17

Question - what is one shift you would make:

Rev. Allison Mark: start prioritizing and resourcing our lay people. Empower and encourage the laity. What does it mean to develop laity and leadership? If we did this for the next decade, congregations would have 50 hours of training to strengthen both clergy and laity and communities.

Rev. Sandra Olwine: change how we compensate clergy. We have been set up on a corporate model - on a capitalist model forever. Clergy have been put in competition with each other. We have been set up to not share or support each other. We have a ladder system which means that bigger is better when it comes to our churches. Which is not true. We could actually move to a system where churches pay into the conference and every clergy person would get the same salary. That salary increments for years of service and family needs (children). Clergy could then be deployed into places where they could effectively serve. Experienced pastors go to places that are struggling. Newer clergy are sent to larger churches with experienced laity as a training process. This would be cross cultural and cross racial across the board. .

Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes: Conference resources ministries on the ground, training and expertise, and need to invest in methods and ideas to get more engaged in ministry. We should be mission centered and not financially centered. This will be life-giving to the served and the serving. Not operating among silos. We will become more effective. There will be people who look like every one of us in every place we serve. We must follow through with our ministries.

Rev. John Woodall: My work involves resourcing. We need to learn that it is okay to talk about money. If we don't learn how to talk about it, we will be in trouble. Last year, religion was the largest part of the pie - 27% of all giving. The challenge is that in 1985, it was responsible for 56% of all charitable giving. Since 1985, it has decreased by 53%. Americans give about 2% - if we take out church people, it is only 2.3% or 2.5%. We are living in a time in which we are in competition for every dollar that is given. Our UMC people have started giving those dollars elsewhere. The future is going to involve learning how to put together multiple streams of revenue to finance ministry. Our Foundation responds in excess of 13.5M back into the system. We need to overhaul how we talk about finance in ministry - a once a year financial campaign is dead in the water. Rev. Woodall said that he would be glad to come to churches to talk about this.

Archana Carey: Setting missional priorities is the key. They should be the top - finance is secondary - mission is primary and God is our provider and we all serve the Lord. She reminded the body of Colossians 3:17.

There will be another budget discussion this afternoon.

A last poll was taken::

Which of these statements most closely reflects where you are:

1. I believe that things in our congregations and conferences are generally fine and we simply need to continue on in ministry as we always have.
2. I believe with some minor adjustments, our present systems can continue to support ministry on the congregational, conference and denominational levels.
3. I believe that the conference needs to consider plans for major restructuring of our financial, programmatic and administrative structures and processes.
4. I believe that the way we are structured and the way that we do things in our churches and conferences is unsalvageable. We need to boldly re-envision what it means to be the church and to design new structures and processes from the ground up.

5. None of these statements quite captures where I am. More conversation is needed.

#3 is where most people are. 1 - 1%, 2 - 9%, 3 - 52% 4 - 30%, 5 - 9%

Q: Karen Cammerr, LaCanada UMC, laity: I want to support what Rev. Allison said that the status quo needs to be questioned. We need to include in laity both community members and church members. We need to get rid of the Wall Street structure. There is a new class of business called B Corporations. They include social income, environmental income, and how they are led income is part of their worth as a company. Wall Street does not define companies that way. We do need to think about how pastors are paid and organized. Develop diversity with not having them at a specific church, but have pastoral groups who oversee a group of churches. A church that would serve as a community park with a playground, serve as a coffee house, serve as housing. My concern about restructuring implies that we keep the structure. Cal Pac leadership needs to step up and serve as leaders in leading the fight against LGBTQ discrimination, combating climate change, and make sure that immigrants are welcome. We have so many opportunities but we are distracted by maintaining the status quo and the world is hurting. They don't come because the church is too distracted to love the people

CONTEND (NHUMC) - Media Team

Contend has 3 phases:

1. Explore - asking questions, exploring how I may be called to serve the church.
2. Embody - over a weekend we inhabit a metaphor for call, ministry and leadership - faith in an exhausted world.
3. Enact - more one on one coaching and mentorship - done in community

Chancellor's Report - Lori Meaders

Bishop Escobedo-Frank gave a word of thanks for the work of Lori Meaders. We all know there is a lot affecting the church as a whole.

Disaffiliation - many churches have requested or are disaffiliating from their Conference. Some have joined the Global Methodist Church, some have elected to remain independent, some merged with other churches. A lot of press is not accurate. Be aware when you read reports.

Some churches who have disaffiliated are in litigation against their Conferences. That is where we are. Our Conference is not as heavily impacted as some other Conferences. We have about 20 churches which have expressed an interest in disaffiliation. We have procedures in place to work with these churches. In November, we will address those churches.

Boy Scouts of America - the bankruptcy procedures and reorganization has been approved. A Settlement Trust was immediately opened in April of 2023. Our Conference is in the process of funding our share of the settlement trust. As a whole, the UMC is contributing \$30M. The total trust is \$2.4 Billion with a lot of claimants. Some of our local churches have been hit with lawsuits by former Boy Scouts. Part of the process is that they are not supposed to file claims against the church or the Conference. However, in the state of California, the statute of limitations for filing claims for those individuals impacted by sexual abuse as a child or youth has been extended. They are allowed to file a claim to protect their rights under that extended statute of limitations through December 31, 2022. We still have some cases rolling in. For those churches who have been served, their lawsuits will be placed on hold right now. A couple of the larger insurers are challenging the settlement.

Extension on statute of limitations - numerous churches have been hit with old claims indicating that they were abused by either a clergy member or a volunteer and go back to the 1970s and 1980s. There are six local churches with 14 claimants, which is very sad news.. Some of the allegations are questionable and some of them are probably true. On the financial side, it takes a long time to go through the suits and the claims are substantial - some are \$6M per person, they are very high. We have already settled two of the smaller claims. But this is going to take time and it is expensive. We have insurance for some. I plead with each church to keep track of your insurance because we are getting claims. You have to be able to track your insurance providers as far back as possible. You have to know who your insurer is to file a claim. Churches may not have those records going back that far. If you have the records, it does help the Conference. Look for your insurance records. The Conference anticipates a rocky road ahead on the financial side.

Closing Prayer and Instructions - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

Bishop Escobedo-Frank responded to lawsuits: We take them seriously and take them to heart. We care about harm that may have happened in the past and we care about those people. God is with us all as we move forward and find ways to assist in this process. To all church folk - part of being in community is to care for each other and be protective in your own circles so that children are protected. Do the work wherever you are to be a community that does good everywhere and does no harm.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank led the conference in prayer, as she prayed for our Chancellor. She prayed for wisdom, to find joy in her life and the gift of return for all she has given. Prayed for the church that we continue to be transparent and responsible and loving and caring.

Rev. Rhodes offered instructions on which doors to use to exit the ballroom. He shared that in the spirit of embracing both our on-line and in-person attendees, the on-line attendees have their own directions for lunch! Know that our hearts and spirits are with you!

Rev. Alonso-Redondo led the body in closing prayer.

**39th Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference
Session 4
2:00 PM (PDT)**

Call to Order - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank called the session to order.

Orders of the Day - Rev. Cathie Capp

Rev. Capp moved the Orders of the Day.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Rev. Capp thanked the Media Team for their work!

Announcements - Rev. Won-Seok Yuh

Rev. Yuh shared a verse from the song, "Livin' on a Prayer"

Reminders: Silence your phones; listen to those giving presentations and take conversations outside of the ballroom. Hopefully you have experienced a better connection on the internet.

A reminder that there is a separate voting slate for clergy and laity for Nominations for Jurisdictional Alternate Delegates, and a separate voting link. For further instructions, please refer to your Cal-Pac introductory email.

Helena Kim, Memorial UMC in East District, laity: I stand with a heavy heart because the church is faced with heavy injustice. Our church has decided to disaffiliate from the UMC. We are facing a road block placed by the Cal-Pac Conference which is demanding 50% of property value as a condition for disaffiliation. It is an impossible condition to fulfill. The fact is that Cal-Pac is inflicting this injustice on the churches who wish to disaffiliate. I come before you pleading to allow us to speak with you. Please come up with terms that will enable us to disaffiliate. The truth is other Conferences are allowing churches to leave. For reasons that we believe are not explained, Cal-Pac is demanding conditions that are impossible to meet. It is injustice and punitive in nature and we need to have this change modified. We wish to worship God according to our conscience. We wish to spend time with you after the Annual Conference.

Glen Haworth, clergy: "I move that the California-Pacific Annual Conference instructs the Conference Board of Trustees to negotiate with disaffiliating churches in the conference for the purpose of arriving at a more equitable and reasonable formula for disaffiliation than the current Guidelines specify. And that specifically, the Trustees consider reducing substantially the 50% of property value currently required of local churches which have voted to disaffiliate. And that these negotiations conclude no later than October 1, 2023."

There was a second.

Glen Haworth, clergy: The requirement to pay 50% of the property value closes the door on all of the churches. My church has 50 members and the property is valued at \$6M. The 50 people in the church would have to come up with \$3M, which is \$60,000 per member. It is impossible. We cannot get a mortgage loan. The payments on that would be \$26,000 per month. I ask this Conference to nudge the Trustees to negotiate. So we can worship in the way we think is right.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I wanted to let you both speak and to share. I rule this out of order according to the Judicial Council decisions 1420, 1457 and 1458. The Conference Board of Trustees have made their decision and we are going to continue with the disaffiliation process as it stands in Paragraph 2553.4.

Glen Haworth: Does this Conference not elect the Board of Trustees?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Yes

Glen Haworth:: Conference has authority over the Board of Trustees.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: This is not the place for the discussion. If you want to talk with me on the side with the Trustees, this is not the place. You have opened up something that I believe we should stop and pray for a moment for those churches who have these decisions to make.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank led the body in prayer.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank shared that today is Margaret Irwin's birthday, and the attendees joined in singing her a rousing chorus of "Happy Birthday!" Bishop Escobedo-Frank commented that Margaret is sharing her birthday with 800 of her best friends!

Nominations Report & Vote - Joyce Zirkle

A video was shown from the Nominations Committee. The Nominations Report is constantly evolving, and the Nominations Committee requests the body's assistance in selecting new Nominations for Jurisdictional Delegates Alternates. The procedures for nominations were presented.

Joyce Zirkle moved REC 23-08, Conference Nominations.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank moved to a vote. It was supported.

Budget Preparation (Priorities) - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank, Howard Hudson & Jonathan Chute

A video was presented on the 2023 Budget, which shared that we are living into our call to end physical and spiritual hunger. Together, we are finding new ways to work in mission together. Lives are being transformed through the love of Jesus Christ, which you offer. The budget for 2024 will not be shared at this time. The system is changing, and we are seeking a more excellent way to align our money to our mission. As a result, the budget will be done differently this year. It is time to serve the needs of the ministry with greater transparency, and accountability through these three areas:

- Building Trust through truth telling and transparency
- Foster Real Inclusion and Beloved Community
- Developing Sustainability of Resources and Creation Care - a task force will be created.

Being transparent, focusing on mission and sustainability all align with our values.

The Annual Conference will engage in a process of discernment and planning for long term sustainability.

At the Annual Conference, we will name what we value as a Conference, what we should prioritize and give guidance to the Budget to reflect our values. GCFA and the Connectional Table will work together to bring you a budget that reflects where we are going, not where we have been. On November 11, 2023, a Special Session of the Annual Conference will be called to vote on the budget. .

Dr. Larry Hgyh, Jr. - It's time for Real Talk Part 2 for some real talk on the budget.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: As I came in as your new Bishop, I began to look at what we have, what our resources are, and how we interpret our resources. I am calling for transparency - where we can see how this "pot of money" is spent.

Archana Carey, Executive Director of Finance & Facilities, Conference Treasurer, told us that we are in good shape financially, so this is the best time to look at what that means and make sure we have sustainability. But we are not in good shape on how our dollars are reaching people who are struggling. Earlier in our plenary, we heard about inequities in pay scales. John Wesley gave us three rules: do no harm, do good and stay in love with God. We must use these rules and the love of Christ when we look at our budget. Does our budget match our vision and our dream? I believe that it can, but it will take time and a different kind of process. We are taking the time until November 11, 2023 to do this. This will be a time when we dig deep and interpret the data we receive from the Committee on Religion and Race and the data we receive regarding clergy pay, mission areas and justice areas. How do we connect those things with our dollars?

Howard Hudson, President, Council on Finance & Administration: We have prepared the budget in a similar way for a very long time. In January, in consultation with all of the Boards and Agencies, we put together a budget based on the limitations we know we have. And we would vote on that budget at a gathering in mid March to present that plan to the Annual Conference in June, when the budget would be put into effect in January. This assumes that nothing will change from March to January! Three years ago, we found out that things do change. I'm not saying that those changes were God's purpose to show us we were doing it wrong, but this is a great opportunity to explore these areas and how we can put a budget together with a sense of mission as opposed to a sense of limitations. We are excited and looking forward to building a budget which supports our vision of ending spiritual and physical hunger.

Jonathan Chute, Clergy, The Foundation: Some of these conversations grew out of the frustrations of going to a meeting in June, having a report, and when questions were raised, there was a feeling that these conversations happened months ago - but the people asking the questions in June had not been invited to be a part of those initial circles. We can't go back and take it apart and do a more nuanced project.

There are other factors too - racial justice, the pandemic, transition on the Connectional Table and within the Connectional Table. There are times when different groups were not a part of the conversation. We felt that with Bishop Dottie present, it was an opportunity to take a breath and to postpone the adoption of the budget until we have had time to develop to a time when we have had time to develop this new way of approaching the budget. A murmuration does not have a leader and it does not have a plan.

Dr. Larry Hygh, Jr.: We heard a preliminary report from the Committee on Race and how the Conference budgets have reflected systemic racism.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: How do we repair the inequities we heard about earlier? Reparations in whatever way we can manage them, will never take away the harm, but they might help someone get ahead. When I was a social worker, they did a pay audit and I was on the lower end of the scale because I was female. I got a significant pay raise to fix it. We can take steps. We may not be able to repair everything right now, but we can take steps to help people know they are valued.

Howard Hudson: We will be able to look at the resources at hand, look at how we can address the issues that were raised this morning, and express those visions. I think that when we begin to get involved in this process, it will open our eyes as to what we can do as we move forward in developing a budget through transparency and inclusion.

Jonathan Chute: The key is having people around the table in the first place, so that their stories are told and they can guide how we develop the budget. We must develop a sense of trust in matching dollars to mission. We can provide folks in leadership the opportunity to make course corrections as needed and give them some agility. We can do a better job of being in the moment of the people we serve.

People were given 2 minutes to share.

Rev. Tom Griffith, retired clergy: I would like you to flesh out what you are looking for in the budget. Pastor's salaries were broken down, and I would like to hear what you have in mind.

A: The idea of the task force is to engage more and more people in a very vital process, as opposed to asking chairs of various committees. As a result of the conversations that were held yesterday and today, budgets

should reflect the priorities of the Conference. The budget is intended to reflect those priorities that we have stated.

Q: Tom Grode, Laity, First LA Church: I want to throw something out - a couple of weeks ago at Skid Row, the California Task Force had emotional emancipation circles, which were all about getting into the issue of generational trauma. I like that trauma was addressed.

Q: Langi Lolohea, Wesley UMC, Pastor: Talking about organizing ourselves in terms of vision and mission is crucial in determining actions. I have been questioning the mission of the UMC and that mission is the great commission to make disciples of Jesus for the transformation of the world. I'm rejecting that mission as an Indigenous person. That was the mission of the missionaries, and to us, the mission of the church is to make us savages and to make our pagan societies civilized. I am arguing to change our mission to Jesus' only command, which is to love one another. That mission is consistent with our Native Peoples and our Native cultures. Love is at the center. For me, the mission of the church is to build a beloved community and the focus is not so much on converting people and building membership and defining success according to the numbers, but on how much we love one another and share that love with the wider community. Unless we change that, we will continue to go this route. I think we need to focus our resources on enabling the grass roots, the local churches, in the work of building beloved communities. That is the witness for the Spirit to make disciples. Making disciples is not our responsibility. Our command is to love one another.

Q: Katharine H. Henry: I am very excited about this and allowing more time for participation. I was dismayed at how budgets were crafted. I have questions - I was interested in what Rev. Sandra Olewine brought up about the distribution of clergy salaries. I think her idea is excellent. I think we are focused on Elders at local churches. I urge this Conference to consider how to look at salaries with Local Pastors and Deacons, along with Elders. They are all doing the ministries that the Conference supports. Regarding the task force, I would like to know how that will be made up. How will it be demographically put together? One of my concerns will be whether young adults will be involved in the process, along with LGBTQIA+ and People of Color.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you. That it is our intention - that we do have a task force that is fully inclusive in all the ways we can be. We have to pay attention and that doesn't happen easily.

Kris Huggins, Glendora UMC: Because of Covid, we couldn't have our Annual Conference. But with all the technology, why couldn't we have a conference on Zoom?

A: We did.

Kris Huggins: I missed it. We already have churches that are leaving. Why do we have to wait until 2024 for people in the LGBTQ community to get married? I don't know why we are approving churches to back out. We are letting them do their own thing, but we aren't showing love to the LGBTQ community. Why do we have to wait?

A: The General Conference in 2024 is about how we are structured. Many people have been working hard for a long time to change this structure so that someone can be married in their own church by their own pastor. Meanwhile, there are many churches and communities who are fully inclusive. Thank you for your comments.

Q: Rev. Sandie Richards, Los Altos UMC: I know that we do not control nor vote on designated funds, and for many of us, they are a mystery. What are our real assets? I would love to see that as part of the Annual Report.

A: That is our intention.

Q: Pastor Louise Fairweathre-Baxter, Crescenta Valley UMC: I would like to make a motion to instruct a task force to implement the proposal of equal salary to all clergy.

A: Rev. Sandra Olewein: Thank you Louise for supporting that idea. It was tried a few years ago. Our Judicial Council ruled it out of order. One of the things we can do is to work on what their objections were, and then bring new legislation. If you want to work on that with me, send me an email and we can do some work to remove some roadblocks and have creative conversation

Q: Rev. Richard Bentley, retired clergy: What is the difference between a church that is dying and a church that is growing financially? Neither have enough money for different reasons. I appreciate the conversations we have been having. This group is one of the most creative, deeply wise groups I know, so my hope is that at next year's Annual Conference, we will spend a day engaging with each other to begin to craft a vision for the entire Annual Conference that we are all a part of creating and shaping.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you for all the comments and questions, and I agree that it takes all of us to move something forward. I want us to remember that there is a dream for God's goodness to be here with us. A dream for heaven to happen on earth. That heaven happens here in the ways we love and care for each other. This Annual Conference has focused on ending physical and spiritual hunger. It has legs. It has heart. It is a vision that can help us connect with people who are hurting. I believe that back in the old days when you pulled out your check register, you thought, "I love God's people and I love God, but I also like to eat out and buy new clothes." Do you spend your money on what you say you love? We can do this work. I believe in us. This Annual Conference has you, and together we can do it. When you make a change, it's gonna hurt ... and it's gonna mostly hurt the people who have not been hurting. As Christians, we lay aside the things that bring us glory to love someone else. We may have to step aside from being at the table, or at the mic or having the money. This is real stuff and I believe it can happen. Life is about giving and taking. If we just take and don't give, we will get constipated.

Retirement Video - Media Team

Rev. Mark Nakagawa - 38 years of service

Jurisdictional Alternate Delegate Vote - Rev. Bob Rhodes

Rev. Rhodes invited Rev. Lea Booth to come forward. Rev. Rhodes instructed the Conference that this is the time we are going to elect both our Lay and Clergy Jurisdictional Reserves. We all like elections, right? The Legislative Team has worked it out so that although there will be different slates for Clergy and Laity, we have figured out how to do the voting at the same time.

Rev. Lea Booth shared that we will definitely give it a shot! In your initial email from the Conference, there is a second voting link. Look for the link in the box that says "Lay" or "Clergy" voting for Jurisdictional Delegates. Click on that link. When you click on the link, you should see a welcome and a sample vote. I will move to a sample question in a moment. We are electing 4 clergy and 4 laity reserves. Each will elect their own Reserve Delegates.

Until someone is elected in either group, you can select up to 4 delegates. It will not submit unless you select at least one candidate. If you do not wish to vote for any candidates, do not select any and do not submit.

A practice question was given to the body, for both clergy and laity.

Rev. Rhodes shared that some of the delegates provided biographies. These are found in the Jurisdictional Reserve document on the AC2023 page of the Conference website. If you look on page JR-1 of that document, you will see a full list of all the candidates.

We are electing four in each category.

Q; Nelson Costadillo, Pastor: Can we still nominate from the floor?

A: Nominations are closed.

Here is the slate for Clergy Nominations for Jurisdictional Delegate Alternates:

Rev. Dr. Sunny Sunwook Ahn, Rev. Lupita Alonso-Redondo, Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes, Rev. Michael Andrew Davis, Rev. Melinda Teter Dodge, Rev. Julie Elkins, Rev. C. Michelle Johns, Rev. Moonyoung Lee, Rev. Melissa Roux MacKinnon, Rev. Stephanie Rice, Rev. Dr. Amy Wake, Rev. Dr. Ken Walden

Here is the slate for Laity Nominations for Jurisdictional Delegate Alternatives:

Mr. Sung Il Ahn, Ms. Sierra Kealohilani Choi, Mr. Kenneth N. Ellis, Ms. Meleanitema P. Sapoi-Finau, Ms. Gaye D. Fisher, Dr. Larry Hygh, Mr. Josh Lopez-Reyes, Deaconess Sharon Gollery McCart, Mr. Michael Mitchell, Mrs. Jan Newton, Mr. Royce Porter Jr., Ms. Rebecca S. Swartz, Suanne Ware-Diaz, Mrs. Cathy A. Wilson

The slate is before you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote, four for clergy and four for laity.

First Vote

Clergy Elected: No election for clergy

Laity Elected: No election for laity

Bishop Escobedo-Frank offered a prayer before the next voting session.

Q: Rev. Mark Nakagawa: What is the minimum threshold for election?

A: 50% plus 1 vote.

Second Vote:

Clergy Elected: Rev. Moonyoung Lee (58.1%), Rev. Lupita Alonso-Redondo (56.4%)

Laity Elected: Dr. Larry Hygh, Jr. (60.7%), Ms. Sierra Kealohilani Choi (53.9%)

Third vote:

Clergy Elected: No election for clergy

Laity Elected: No election for laity

Bishop Escobdo-Frank: Thank you for listening for God's Spirit as you vote.

Q: Jan Newton, Shepherd of the Hills, Laity - please withdraw my name from consideration.

Jan Newton's name was withdrawn.

Fourth Vote:

Clergy Elected: Rev. Dr, Ken Walden (52.9%)

Laity Elected: No election for laity

Fifth Vote:

Clergy Elected: Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes (50.5%)

Laity Elected: Ms. Meleanitema P. Sapoi-Finau (70.5%), Ms. Cathy A. Wilson (53.6%)

The vote has been completed.

Clergy Reserve Delegates: Rev. Moonyoung Lee, Rev. Lupita Alonso-Redondo, Rev. Dr, Ken Walden, Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes

Laity Reserve Delegates: Dr. Larry Hygh, Jr., Ms. Sierra Kealohilani Choi, Ms. Meleanitema P. Sapoi-Finau, Ms. Cathy A. Wilson

Bishop Escobedo-Frank prayed for all of the delegates.

Legislation - Rev. Lea Booth

RULES 23-02 - Cabinet Expense Account Policies

Rev. Booth moved RULES 23-02. It is properly before us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

RULES 23-03 Local Church Clergy Expenses

Rev. Booth moved RULES 23-03. It is properly before us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

RES 23-02 - Identifying and Opposing Apartheid in the Holy Land

Rev. Booth moved RES 23-02. It is properly before us.

Q: Teresa LaSalle, Laity, Culver Palms UMC - I speak in favor of this Resolution. I think that sometimes we can be confused when it comes to the situation in the Middle East and the violence that is happening. What voices can we listen to and who do we hear? We should listen to global experts like Amnesty International. They have published large reports and have come to the unavoidable conclusion that Israel has established an apartheid regime. We also can listen to other people in the world who have the most experience with apartheid, and that is the South Africans. Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela visited Palestine, and they have said it is apartheid. What we have seen is worse than anything that existed in South Africa. Not only is it apartheid, it has been taken to new levels. We should listen to the voices of the Palestinian people. The world does not want to listen. We are asked to name their reality for what it is so that the world will come together to end apartheid. We ask you to do this in the spirit of love for the entire Holy Land.

Esther Benedict, Ventura First, Laity: I am against this Resolution. I had the blessing to be a part of a Bar Mitzvah at Temple Akiba. When we arrived there there were steel doors and security guards. That is because a week earlier a gunman at the Tree of Life synagogue murdered people. The Rabi reminded us that it was the 80th anniversary of Kristal Nicht. The Southern Poverty Law Center tells us that antisemitism is on the

rise. When people tell you what they plan to do, we should believe them. There is a lot of good in this Resolution. This Resolution however, addresses just one facet of a multi-sided problem.

Rick Shcrader, UMC of Westlake Village, Laity: I speak against this Resolution. It is well intentioned and sincere in the belief that this Resolution will lead to peace. There are those who want to destroy the State of Israel and there are those who will use these types of resolutions seeking to weaken and isolate and destroy the State of Israel. We all want peace and all to be treated with dignity and respect. I urge you to vote no.

Rev. Sandra Olewine, former missionary to Israel for over 10 years: This is a very emotional discussion for people. The statements that have been made in the room about antisemitism are true. The rise of antisemitism in our own nation is true and Palestinians are not responsible for that. To name the realities of the State of Israel is to name clearly these policies so there can be clear steps taken. To scapegoat Palestinians for the rise in antisemitism has been done for years. It does not stop antisemitism. To speak out for Palestinians does not mean that we are against Israel. Israel State policy is what we need to deal with and naming it for what it is is how we do the work. I urge you to vote yes.

Cynthia Tuell, Laity: I am for this resolution. In 1986, the UMC divested from South Africa because of apartheid. Along with many other churches and groups across the world, protesting plus the hard work of the oppressed ended apartheid in 1994 in South Africa. If we can help the Palestinians, then I say vote yes.

Drew Patterson, Shepherd of the Valley: I am against point 2. The United States' international policy is pretty bad across the board and I don't think we want our name connected with them. They will probably mess up somehow. We should not advocate through the government. Instead of advocacy, we should do more missionary work in that area. I don't see anyone listening to a bunch of voices across the world who aren't a part of their culture. It should be fought at the General Conference level, we are not the worldwide branch.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank reported that we have heard three statements for and three statements against, and called for a vote. It was supported.

REC 23-06 - Sale of Camp Colby - Updated on AC 2023 website
Rev. Booth moved REC 23-06. It is properly before us.

Q: Rev. Rich Ules, Shepherd of the Hills, Rancho Margarita, clergy: I am in favor of this motion. At 14 years old I went to Camp Colby, not sure I wanted to live. Camping Ministry at Camp Colby saved my life. I learned that somehow God loved me. It was at Camp Colby that I heard my call to ministry. It was at Camp Colby where I made every important life choice. It is holy ground. We have done a poor job of maintaining our camps and we should be accountable. If the sale helps other camping ministries, I vote in favor of this motion.

Q: Mark Stephenson, General Conference Delegate: I appreciate hearing the words of saving lives and holy ground and the motion I would like to bring before is to memorialize and honor what has come before us. Rev. Dr. Ed Hansen and Burt Hall were instrumental in the Strength for the Journey camp, which originated at Camp Colby. I wish to memorialize and honor Strength for the Journey at Camp Colby.

I would like to make a motion to memorialize and honor Strength for the Journey, which originated at Hollywood UMC and Camp Colby.

Q: Are you stating this as an amendment to the Motion?

A: Yes.

There was a second.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Does anyone wish to speak to this amendment to the motion?

Q: Rev. Rachel Tabutol, clergy, co-chair of the camping retreat ministry. We accept it as a friendly amendment.

Q: Rev. Sandra Olewine: I'm not sure what Mark means by "memorialize."

A: To recognize and live into what has happened. We do not forget how horrible it would be for this Conference to forget and to remember our camping ministries. We need to honor that.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a brief recess for a consultation on REC 23-06.

A retirement video will be played while the Bishop is in consultation.

Retirement Video

Rev. Dulce Proud - 35 years of service.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: There is no such thing as a friendly amendment in Roberts Rules.

Q: Rev. Julie Elkins, clergy: Would the memorial be a part of the decommissioning service? Is that what you are talking about?

A: Mark Stephenson: Yes, a part of the decommissioning service.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank asked for a moment to consult. The amendment will be put on the screen.

The Stephenson Motion is to add Strength for the Journey to the decommissioning process.

Q: Suanne Ware-Diaz, Laity, I want to ask a question regarding the budgeting and the land. Many years ago we did a reconciliation with Native peoples. We need to think about the lands we are on right now and that we have had a history that was traumatic. It impacts Native American communities. Will there be a consideration of giving back the land to the Native peoples in that area or that monies be offered as a part of the reconciliation?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We need to stay with the Amendment.

Amendment to the Motion: Do you approve the Stephenson amendment to memorialize the Camp Colby decommissioning service?

The Amendment is properly before us.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on the Stephenson Amendment. It was supported.

Michael Mitchell, laity: I am against the motion because it seems like there is no plan for our camping ministries. We are selling properties but there are no comprehensive plans when it comes to the assets of camping ministries. There is no logical process of going forward for upkeep. My fear is that five years down the road, we will be in the same place.

Drew Patterson, Laity: I took away a few important truths. Our camping ministry is doing its best and is back at pre pandemic levels. The report said that we are probably incapable of revitalizing Camp Colby. I'm inclined to agree with that because of the frustration that the Conference did not take care of it. In that report, there was still language that it could be revitalized, but just not for us. I suggest that we sell it to a Christian denomination to turn it into something operational, even if it does not belong to us.

Q: Suanne Ware-Diaz, Laity: How can I get an answer that if it is sold, how we can get a budget decision that would be part of our acts of reconciliation - either the land or monies coming from it?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: That is a good question for camping ministries going forward.

Q: Gaye Fisher, Laity: I'm against this because in #27, it recommends the sale of parts or all, so we are not really voting on whether or not we are selling the whole thing. At the end, they are going to hold onto the money at a future time and place to be determined. The money needs to go into Camping.

A: We are working with the forestry service. It is 360 acres and the forest service may be interested in purchasing it for reclamation. If we sell as it is, it cuts the forestry service out. That is why we eliminated it.

Rachel Tabutol, Co-Chair Camping Ministries: in the first Resolved statement, it refers to RES 21-03 and that monies go to improve current campgrounds, repaying debt and to future camping ministries.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We have heard two speeches for and two against. We will take one more of each.

Katharine H. Henry online: I want to ask why the change to part or all was changed. Now after hearing about the Forest Service, does that mean that if the Forest Service purchases the land, would the other part not be sold? The intent in the change is to enable the sale of the entire property in multiple parts.

Kenny Funk, Camping Ministries: No matter how it is cut, Colby will be sold. If we sell part of it to the forest service, it doesn't save Colby. Part of the property sits on forest land. We want to sell part of that land to the forest service. The way it was written, we had to sell the entire thing to the forest service. We want to sell part of the property to Forest Services.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: (To Camping Ministries) Please speak to Suanne Ware-Diaze about her question. Thank you.

Rev. Broghan Hunt, clergy: I am speaking in favor. Colby is a camp I grew up with, I was the director of Colby in 2019. Colby was run into disrepair. In 2019, if you would have given me \$1M, it would still be in disrepair. One of the issues is that we run on minimum wage for the workers. Colby is a 45 minute drive from cell service. Staffing Colby is not sustainable. I don't want to see it go, but I want to see it loved and cared for but that is not something we can do anymore. We must face the reality that this Conference cares more about the memories of Colby than the care of Colby and the camping ministries.

Q: Rev. Dr. Adonijah Ogbonnaya, clergy, Venice UMC: I want to ask a basic question - what I've noticed is our ability to sell stuff without creating new stuff. When we sell this property, I have not read anything to have another place where our children can go. Where will the finance go? We have a tendency to sell things without building something new? And since I don't know, my answer is no.

Kenny Funk, Director of Camping Ministries: We have several things to talk about, but I will tell you about a new program called "Camp on the Go" which brings camping to your facilities. Bring a whole day of camp activities in your site and help us invigorate the ministry. Our goal right now is to have a retreat center in our Conference - that is a goal. We are working to establish programs for ALL age levels in our Conference.

Rev. Dr. Adonijah Ogbonnaya: With all due respect, we have all the programs. For you to stand there and tell me that we are going to do something new when we have not been doing well with the programs we have.

Monalisa Tu'itahi, laity: I stand in solidarity with Suanne Ware-Diaz. I would like the answer to reflect our Conference. Something more than "we will talk about it". Reconciliation has had no teeth right now, and the Annual Conference needs that answer in order to vote. Standing in solidarity with the acts of reconciliation.

Rev. Rachel Tabutol: I hear what you are saying. I would request that the two of you plus camping retreat ministries discuss how we can do this effectively to honor where we stand and to work towards where the Conference wants to be. We are open to the conversation and want to be open on how we move forward.

Gaye Fisher, Community UMC: Why can't we pull this motion and have it heard next year, after the new budget and conversations with the camping ministry?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you for the great discussion. It is before you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on REC 23-06 as amended. It was supported.

Rev. Richard Bentley: Point of Order! I believe it is order Bishop, Point of Order.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: A vote has been made.

Rev. Bentley: I asked for a point.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank:: The vote has been approved.

Rev. Bentley: I asked for a point of order.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank:: And I'm telling you ...

Rev. Bentley: I asked for the point before the motion ...

Bishop Escobedo-Frank:: It was already on the screen Richard, that's why I said it first, because it was on the screen.

Rev. Bentley: Then I move reconsideration. I know I will lose this motion.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Please speak up, I'm having trouble hearing you.

Rev. Bentley: I move reconsideration, though actually I can't do that so I'm sorry.

I do believe the question of tabling the motion or putting it off was probably properly made- there were seconds, I heard them, and then we should have dealt with that first, but I can ask for reconsideration. I'm sorry.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Is this a question because if it's a motion you have to have voted in a certain way.

Rev. Bentley: I understand that. I cannot ask for reconsideration. I'm acknowledging how I voted in public. I'm being honest with the rules.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you.

Rev. Bentley: But I'm asking that if someone who voted in the affirmative can make that motion, and that I think I can do this.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Hearing none, we are going to move on to the next legislative recommendation, which is 23-05.

REC 23-05 - Advance Specials

Rev. Booth moved REC 23-05. It is properly before us.

Christie Clark, Deacon: I am here to make an amendment to REC 23-05. Strengthening the Black Village is listed as Strengthening the Black Church. I move that we correct the name so that we can become an advanced special.

This was approved last year and there was a typo in the name, and is still there. It is Strengthening the Black Village, not Black Church. We are working with families, strengthened, nurtured, and encouraged. We train clergy and laity to conduct these courses. As a Deacon, it is my job, honor and pleasure to bridge church and world. I ask that we can be added to the list. I want to thank St. Mark LA and St. John Watts and LIFT for the support they have given. I look forward to this next season.

Denyse Barnes, clergy: I owe Christie an apology - it is a typo - it should have been changed to Strengthening the Black Village.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Change the word Church to Village? Are you willing to accept that?

Christie Clark: Yes.

Q: Rev. Frank Wulf, Echo Park UMC: I have a question. It also has Echo Park UMC Refugee Center. It should be Echo Park Immigration Center.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: It is accepted.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

REC 23-07 - Conference Hispanic Committee Strategic Plan
Rev. Booth moved REC 23-07. It is properly before us.
Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Q: Denyse Barnes, Clergy: I have a request for prayer. Pride Night is at Dodgers Stadium. In their parking lot, there are hundreds of Proud Boys who are protesting the right to our existence. Rev. Dr. Denyse Barnes led the body in prayer.

COSRW - Rev. Sandie Richards, Outgoing Chair

We are reengaged in the work in this Conference of helping to work on inequity in an inclusive way. We invite anyone who is interested in helping in that work to join us. We are looking forward to the coming year. Equity for clergy and laity in an intersectional way.

We have experienced harm in our Conference. If you have experienced harm, we support you. If you need support, please contact us. These things happen in churches. We want to guard our mental health and our emotional health.

As part of that data collection and building trust, we have been doing the monitoring around who is at the mic and who is speaking, who is presenting, and who is doing motions. We are gathering that data and will release it at the appropriate time. Clergy sisters in the Southern Baptist Convention, we see you and lift you up as sacred during these hurtful times.

Cabinet Matters- Rev. Melissa Roux MacKinnon, Dean

It has been a year of change and recovery as well as delight and resurrection. We have great joy in welcoming our new Bishop, Bishop Dottie. We have had a great time getting to know Bishop Dottie, her leadership, vision and her compassion and her willingness to get in the car and tour her new Conference. She was in small churches and large gatherings. It is a great way to explore and see the diverse geography of our Annual Conference. We had a time of exchanging gifts and greetings. But we failed to properly greet a member of her family - Chica. Today we have some gifts for Chica. Chica travels with Bishop Dottie and Dr. Frank. She might need a purple outfit when she goes to visit. We want her to be properly hydrated so we have a special water bottle that turns into a bowl. Let us welcome our new bishop, Bishop Dottie, Dr. Frank and Chica.

Part of the other changes that we are going to experience is that one among us, Rev. Mark Nakagawa is retiring. If you saw his video in this session, you know what a thankful, sweet guy he is. We are thankful for the many ways you served our Conference. He came in 1994, at West LA Centenary Church. In 2016, he came on to the Cabinet. Let us thank him with our applause.

Rev. Mark was asked to come on stage.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We have made a plaque for you - he has been honored all over the place and they have honored him, so we want to do the same. It has a picture of his new Bishop and his previous Cabinet, for Mark has a heart of gold and is a beloved friend, LA's natural mayor, and in Japanese - one life, one truth. I would like to say that it didn't take long to really enjoy being around Mark. He has a story for every location. We thank you for your presence. Your presence has changed us. You have made so many people feel seen and heard and loved. Know that even though you are retired, I know your phone number, so just in case, don't go too far. We love you.

Rev. Mark Nakagawa: Bishop, Cabinet, clergy - thank you. If I had known, I would have grabbed a tie. I am humbled and thankful. I actually returned to Cal-Pac in 1994. Centenary is my home church. I actually returned to this Conference after serving my first nine years in the Cal-Nevada Conference. It is a joy to return home and to serve the churches here and to be on the Cabinet. But most importantly to serve in the region I was born in. I thought I knew every aspect of this city, but it is through our churches that I have seen and experienced what really goes on in our communities and the important role our churches play. It is etched in my heart. Even retired, I will continue to do what I can if called. Even after retirement, I'm just a phone call away. I won't be able to do anything for you, cause that's your new District Superintendent's responsibility. Bishop Dottie, if and when you call, I will do whatever you say. Thank you again everybody. It is a blessing to be here. Thank God that this session is right here in Los Angeles and I didn't have to drive 50 miles to get to Redlands. Thank you again everybody.

Rev. MacKinnon introduced the rest of the Cabinet, and thanks were given.

Rev. MacKinnon shared that, "We often wish we could share with you as your Cabinet the wonderful ways the Spirit is moving out across our Annual Conference. We get to see the way that God is actively ending spiritual and physical hunger. So today, we have a video that highlights some of the ways our churches are doing this."

A video was shown that celebrated the ministries of many churches in our Annual Conference who are actively ending physical and spiritual hunger.

Rev. MacKinnon continued, "As you can see, there are so many ways we are helping to end spiritual and physical hunger. There are times when we have to vote to close churches. Often heart-breaking times. This year, the story is different. As you heard in the video, ReNew took a significant step in joining the community. Within the closures come the seeds of rebirth. Closed in 2014, and in 2018, a dream began. ReNew was developed and over the next five years, it was watered and nurtured through hard work and building relationships. It met the benchmarks of vitality. They gave an apportionment each year, even though they did not have to.

On May 31, 2023, ReNew held a Constituting Church Conference where in accordance with the laws and discipline of the United Methodist Church, declared that ReNew UMC was duly constituted and organized for the glory of God, the proclamation of the Gospel, and service to humanity. We want to thank Rev. Sam Park for his dedication to ministry. To Rev. Mary Dennis, the North District Change Manager, Rev. Jim Powell, who was the D.S. who started this process, and all the members of ReNew, we give thanks. I know we have members with us here from ReNew who partnered with the North District Union. Today is a special and momentous occasion. If you were part of ReNew's journey, please stand. Bishop, you too. They were all greeted with applause. In a time of church closures and churches not being relevant, we welcome a new church in our midst. On that note, the Cabinet report concludes.

Closing Prayer and Instructions - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

Rev. Rhodes: Thank you - we endured long times in a room with voting and elections and you stuck through it and did good work. We heard a lot of emotion and I would say that my heart was touched today as we voted relating to a place that is sacred to me. Colby Ranch is where I too heard my call. I don't think we can vote in this way, and not offer a time of prayer. We pray for all, not only the people who may look like us. We pray for the people who came before, and who lived on the land. Rev. Rhodes led us in prayer.

If you were just elected as a Reserve Delegate, please meet your colleagues at the back of the ballroom.

Ken Ellis led the people of the Annual Conference in closing prayer.

39th Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference
Worship Service - "Rest as Resistance & Renewal"
7:00 PM (PDT)

Prelude: "Like the Dew (In the Morning) J. Christie-McCallister BAM Trio

Call to Worship: "Lord, I Believe a Rest Remains" Pastor Akanesi Tupou

Opening Prayer: "In Times of Weakness" by John Birch Pastor Akanesi Tupou

Pastor Tupou invited the band to come forward and introduce themselves. Ricardo Mowatt, drums and percussion, introduced the band: On bass, Harvey Estrada. On keyboards, Gregory Broadous. Guest vocalist, Zuri Alexander. Ricardo shared Rev. Victor Cyrus-Franklin, pastor of Inglewood UMC, invited them to perform at this Annual Conference. He is a member of Holman UMC, and the trio has been playing at both churches for years. As a collective, they are called The BAM Trio. Ricardo is a member of Holman UMC, and BAM is the house band for Holman UMC.

Pastor Topou shared that this evening's worship is not your typical Sunday morning worship service. There will be scripture and poetry and three preachers. Pastor Topou introduced the preachers for this evening: Rev. Kurt Poland, Rev. Darin Arnston, and Rev. Dr. Christopher Carter.

The poetry readers for this evening are Hehenga Esau, Ireland Bone and Theodora Tuitupou.

Scripture: 1 Kings 17:2-7 Rev. Kurt Poland

Homily Rev. Kurt Poland

Poem "Nourish Me" by Rev. July Brewster Elkins Hehenga Esau

Song: "Sanctuary (Lord Prepare Me)" BAM Trio

Scripture: Hebrews 4:8-10 Rev. Darin Arnston

Homily Rev. Darin Arnston

Poem "Living" by Liberty from The Loft/Westwood UMC Ireland Bone

Song: "Walk with Me, Lord" BAM Trio

Scripture: Matthew 11:25-30 Rev. Dr. Christopher Carter

Homily Rev. Dr. Christopher Carter

Poem “Table of Grace” by Rev. Julie Bewster Elkin

Theodora Tuitupou

A video was shown presenting the crisis at the border. All offerings received at this year’s Annual Conference will support the Immigration Crisis Fund. We are facing unprecedented numbers of refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants at our borders. Donations will fund welcome centers, care packages, and various ministries among the migrants across our conference, as well as working towards justice reform measures. You may also give online.

Offertory Song: “Wade in the Water”

BAM Trio with Guest Vocalist Zuri Alexander

Prayer Over the Offering

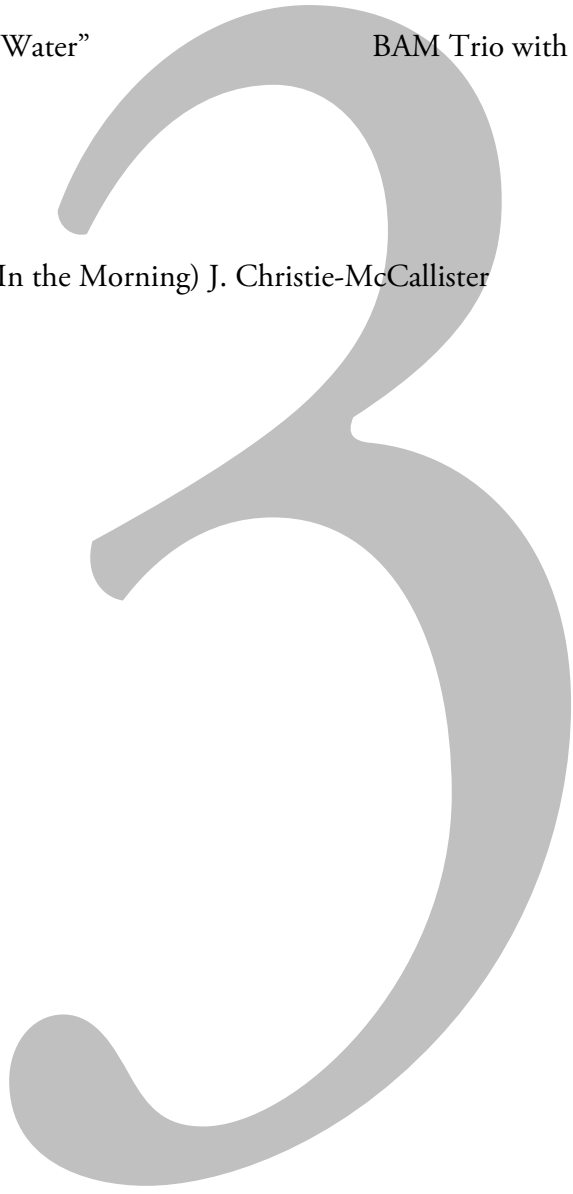
Pastor Akanesi Tupou

Closing Prayer

Pastor Akanesi Tupou

Closing Song “Like the Dew (In the Morning) J. Christie-McCallister

BAM Trio



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