

southern connect



Redwood Christianity

There are trees, and then there are California Redwoods. These 300-foot skyscrapers of the forest are tall and can spread as wide as a house. But the tallest trees on earth do not stand because they possess the deepest roots individually. They survive storms and endure for centuries because their roots intertwine beneath the surface, seldom deeper than six feet, forming a network of strength and support

that shares nutrients and resources that strengthen their resilience.

There is something deeply spiritual about that image.

In a culture that glorifies rugged independence, the kingdom of God stands in sharp contrast, promoting harmony, connection, and shared purpose.

An old proverb says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." The story of the early church reveals the wisdom of that truth.

In the book of Acts, the gospel spread through networks of ordinary believers who lived, served, worshiped, suffered, and witnessed together. While the apostles played a vital role, the movement of Christianity was carried forward by everyday disciples filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8 tells us that after persecution scattered the believers, "those who had been scattered preached the word

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wherever they went" (Acts 8:4, NIV). The remarkable part of that passage is that it was not primarily the apostles who carried the gospel outward. It was ordinary believers. Men and women whose names we will never know became instruments through which God transformed the world.

The gospel rippled out along friendship lines, family tables, workplaces, acts of compassion, and communities of belonging. The strength of the

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Danny Chan
**Executive Secretary/
Ministerial Director**



Southern California Conference
of Seventh-day Adventists

President John H. Cress | **Executive Secretary** Danny Chan | **Treasurer/CFO** Kathleen V. Diaz | **Executive Vice President** Royal L. Harrison

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southern connect **Editor** Lauren Lacson | **Submit a story** Email us at: communication@sccsda.org

movement was not found merely in great leaders but in connected believers living a shared mission.

Research tells us that people are strengthened when they gather around shared identity and purpose. At Southern California Conference, our mission is to *Exalt Christ by cultivating healthy churches and schools*. Healthy churches and schools do not flourish in isolation. Families, educators, pastors, members, and leaders all play a role in shaping spiritually thriving communities that reflect the character of Jesus. The mission before us is simply too large, too meaningful, and too urgent to carry alone.

Redwoods remind us that strength is often hidden beneath the surface. Long before the height of the tree becomes visible, an unseen network of support has already been formed below ground. In much the same way, every act of encouragement, every shared prayer, every ministry partnership, every church-school collaboration quietly strengthens the larger mission of God.

Alone, we may move quickly for a season. But together, rooted

in Christ and connected to one another, we can go farther than we ever imagined. •



Congratulations graduates!

Congratulations to all of our graduates! From kindergarten all the way to high school, you have worked so hard. We look forward to seeing how God will work in your life!

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

JEREMIAH 29:11 (NIV)

Adventist Education Simi Valley (K-8)	Adventist Union School (K-8)	Antelope Valley Adventist School (K-8)
Conejo Adventist Elementary School (K-8)	East Valley Adventist School (K-8)	Glendale Adventist Academy (K-12)
Linda Vista Adventist Elementary School (K-8)	Los Angeles Adventist Academy (K-10)	Newbury Park Adventist Academy (9-12)
Ridgecrest Adventist Elementary (K-8)	San Fernando Valley Academy (K-12)	San Gabriel Academy (K-12)
South Bay Christian School (K-8)	West Covina Hills Adventist School (K-8)	



David Zaid Is Ordained

BY ARAYA MOSS

Do you know God's purpose for your life?" This was the question David Zaid was asked in his 20s that set him on a path he didn't expect to walk.

"When I was approached with that question, I didn't have an answer," Zaid recalled. "That caused me to really fast, pray, seek God, hear His voice, and then to follow in that direction."

It was in this moment when Zaid felt God first spoke to him about ministry. First he ministered to young people at his home church, then as a youth pastor in Orange County, which ultimately led to his current role, pastor of Philadelphian church in Long Beach.

His calling was confirmed this spring when he was ordained to the gospel ministry at the very church he grew up in and has served as lead pastor in since 2013.

Zaid's ordination service was full of the love and support the Philadelphian church is known for. Through uplifting music from the Philadelphian praise team and dance group Anointed Feet and moving words from ministry colleagues, it was an afternoon celebrating God's work in Zaid's life. Zaid was deeply humbled and took time express gratitude

God saw in His
mercy and His
grace to use me.

for what God has done and to everyone who has shaped his ministry throughout his life—family, friends, and colleagues.

Zaid shared about an early time in his ministry when he was at church preparing for a Friday night praise program. The sun was shining through the stained-glass window and cast a light in front of the pulpit when he felt God's presence and realized, "If God could use anybody, He could use me, and I simply would say 'yes,'" he recalled. "It means the world to me that the ordination could happen in the same spot where I stepped into the light. Whether it's five years, 13 years, or 37 years, I just want to be used."

Zaid steps into his calling honored to serve. "God saw in His mercy and His grace to use me," Zaid added. "I will continue to be that one who will bring God my two fish and my five loaves and ask God, 'How can you multiply this today?' Because every time someone is fed and someone is served, I say to myself over and over again, 'Thank you, God, for using me to transform lives and to push and pull as many as I can into the kingdom.'" ●



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Be sure to subscribe so you don't miss the latest content, like an upcoming episode of our Cultivate podcast featuring Pastor Zaid. Plus, Pastor Zaid's ordination interview is now live on our YouTube channel. Stay in touch for this and more!



Thank you CAMP CEDAR FALLS WORKBEE APRIL 2026 VOLUNTEERS!

From cleaning the lodge and repairing the Fire Bowl to repainting the nature center and worshipping, eating, and praying together, it was a jam-packed weekend. We couldn't have done it without you!

SEPTEMBER 19, 2026
WHITE MEMORIAL CHURCH
4:00 P.M.



IMPACT 26

INSPIRING MEMBERS TO IMPACT THEIR COMMUNITIES

**"TED TALK" -
STYLE SESSIONS**

EVANGELISM
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
MONEY MATTERS
& MORE