



Central California District Council
66th Episcopal District of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Inc.
Bishop, Mark C. Tolbert, 1st Assistant President, PAW, Interim Diocesan
Bishop-elect Gentry Richardson Jr., Chairman

CCDC Chairman's Address
35th Central California District Council – Summer Council Session

Greetings and Praise the Lord,

We Honor our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! To our esteemed Interim Diocesan, Bishop Mark C. Tolbert and the beautiful Lady Emelda Tolbert, our Suffragan Bishops, Executive Board, District Elders, Pastors, Evangelists, and all fellow laborers in the Gospel.

I greet each of you in the strong and mighty name of Jesus Christ. It is both an honor and a privilege to welcome this great august body of believers to the *35th Annual Summer Council Session of the Central California District Council*. We gather in fellowship, unity, and in divine purpose as we continue advancing the work of the Kingdom of God.

Our theme for this Council, once again, ***“When Zion Travails,”*** taken from Isaiah 66:8: *“Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.”*

This powerful passage reminds us that true spiritual growth, revival, and Kingdom expansion are never accidental—they are intentional. They are birthed through prayer, sustained through sacrifice, and manifested through unwavering faith. When the people of God begin to travail before Him, heaven responds. When Zion groans, God moves. When Zion labors, God brings forth.

And I believe we are in a season where God is calling this Council to a deeper place—not just activity, but spiritual productivity; not just gathering, but birthing; not just form, but power!

As Chairman, I want to encourage each of you to continue in unity, because working together truly matters. Unity is not optional—it is essential! The progress we have witnessed across this Council stands as clear evidence that God honors unity. Psalm 133 declares: *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity...”*

David illustrates unity through two powerful images: the sacred anointing oil flowing upon Aaron, and the refreshing dew descending upon Zion. This teaches us that unity carries both the anointing and the refreshing of God. Where there is unity, there is flow. Where there is unity, there is life. Where there is unity, there is a commanded blessing.



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I want to remind us—division delays, but unity accelerates. When we stay together, we grow together.

Over this past year, the Lord has truly blessed the Central California District Council. We have experienced meaningful growth and measurable progress. Our social media team has expanded its capacity, enhancing both national and international visibility. We thank God for the gifted individuals serving in that ministry, helping us reach beyond walls and into regions we may never physically touch.

We are also blessed with faithful and excellent teams across every area—ushers, healthcare professionals, hospitality, children’s ministry leaders, security, and our dynamic music ministry, including musicians, choir, and praise team. Also, our program and logistics team, our plan is to have our council locations posted early, to allow time to make arrangements to attend. Each ministry has played a vital role in strengthening our worship experience and cultivating an atmosphere where the presence of the Lord can dwell freely.

Attendance and engagement at our Council sessions continue to increase, and through faithful stewardship and the support of our churches, we witnessed full accommodations, with hotel rooms completely booked. That is not just growth—that is momentum. And we give God all the glory.

We are especially grateful for the leadership of Evangelist McNeil in establishing a dedicated Intercessory Prayer Team. Because if there is ever a time, we need prayer—it is now. This team will be actively covering our services, creating a spiritual hedge of protection, ensuring that nothing hinders what God desires to do among us.

As you know the Monday preceding each Council is corporate intercessory prayer for all members of the CCDC. We understand this: what happens publicly is sustained by what is done privately in prayer. Men ought to always pray. The Word of God reminds us in 2 Chronicles 7:14: *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray... then will I hear from heaven.”*

As we continue moving forward, we remain committed to transparency, integrity, and community-centered leadership. Our Suffragan Bishops and District Elders are actively engaged in supporting our auxiliaries—offering guidance, strengthening leadership, celebrating progress, and ensuring that every ministry remains aligned with the vision of this Council.

We are not just maintaining—we are building. We are not just organizing—we are advancing. We are not just existing—we are impacting!



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Before I close, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to every constituent of this Council. Your prayers, your support, your labor, and your faithfulness have strengthened this District in ways that cannot be fully measured. What we see today is the result of collective sacrifice and commitment.

I am also deeply honored to serve as Chairman, I want to thank the PAW, the EBC and Bishop Theodore Brooks for the honor to be selected second in succession to the late Bishop Robert T. Douglas, whose faithful service and labor of love laid the foundation upon which we continue to build on. His impact still speaks, and we are standing on his shoulders and the foundation he left. We thank God for his life, his vision, and his enduring legacy. I also want to say thank you to Bishop Mark C. Tolbert for his excellent leadership, wisdom and knowledge during a very difficult time for the CCDC. He came in and helped us rebound and Bishop, we appreciate you from the bottom of our hearts.

As we convene for this *35th Council under the theme "When Zion Travails,"* let this not just be a theme—but a mandate. Let it challenge us to pray deeper, to serve stronger, to unite closer, and to believe greater.

Because I am convinced—there is still more that God wants to bring forth through the CCDC.

I firmly believe that the future of the Central California District Council is bright, and that the Lord is positioning us for greater growth, greater influence, and greater impact.

Let us move forward together—in unity, in strength, and in love—as we build strong churches, equip effective leaders, and expand the Kingdom of God.

May the Lord continue to bless each of you as we labor together in His vineyard.

Come with us, and we will do you good.

In His Service,

Bishop-elect Gentry W. Richardson, Jr. – Chairman
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