



Newsdesk – Ordinations of Berit von Pohle and Fernando Lista

This year has seen great advances in recognizing the importance of Adventist education. A unique ministry, without rival in its scope and impact on our church, Adventist education has been a transformative blessing to countless lives. The Pacific Union Conference operates the largest educational system within the Adventist church, and the ordination of two education leaders during 2021 indicates the importance church leaders attach to this ministry.



Pacific Union Conference Director of Education Berit von Pohle Ordained to the Gospel Ministry

Church administrators, coworkers, and friends gathered on Founder’s Green at La Sierra University on Saturday, June 26, for an afternoon ordination service for Pacific Union Director of Education Berit von Pohle.

“We add our hands of blessing on the ministry that has already taken place and is taking place,” prayed Nate Furness, lead pastor at Napa Community church, during the program.

Brooke Lemmon, von Pohle’s daughter and a principal in Southeastern California, introduced her mother to those gathered and shared more insights into Elder von Pohle’s life.

Von Pohle has served as director of education at the Pacific Union Conference since June 2011. She previously worked as a teacher and academy principal in Southeastern California Conference, an academy principal in Oregon Conference, and superintendent in Northern California Conference.

Berit spent 12 years teaching—first at San Diego Academy and then at La Sierra Academy. During those years, she earned a master’s degree in counseling and added the roles of school counselor and registrar to her teaching load.

Schooling continued, and Berit completed the Specialist in Education degree in educational administration, which prepared her for her first principal position at San Pasqual Academy. As principal, Berit worked closely with the local church pastor to create a spiritual climate that would draw the students to Jesus.

After 14 years as an academy principal, Berit became superintendent of the Northern California Conference and cast the vision that our classrooms should have an expectation of excellence in an atmosphere of knowing Jesus. And she went back to school again, this time completing an Ed.D. in educational administration by the early years of her tenure as director of education for the Pacific Union Conference.



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Berit's husband, Chico, who passed away last year, was one of her greatest champions. Their daughter, Brooke, is forging her own administrative journey as the principal at Oceanside Elementary School. Brooke and her husband, Kyle, have two daughters, Arden and Ava. Berit's mother continues to provide support and wisdom.



Ordination of Fernando Lista, Nevada-Utah Director of Education, to the Gospel Ministry

The Nevada-Utah Conference (NUC) celebrated an ordination service for Director of Education Fernando Lista on Sabbath, October 30, at the Riverview church in Reno, Nevada. Gary Venden, pastor of the Glendale church, in Glendale, Arizona, presented Fernando's life and trajectory as an educator; Berit von Pohle, vice president for education of the Pacific Union Conference, presented the ordination sermon; and NUC President Carlos Camacho gave the ordination charge in front of an audience of educators, friends, and family.

Fernando Lista was born and raised in an Adventist home in Argentina. Fernando's mother, Alicia, used to tell the story of four-year-old Fernando playing "preacher" in the backyard. He would line up empty canning jars as if they were members of the church, then use a wooden box as a pulpit and pretend to read from the Bible while he preached to the jars. Fernando grew to love and serve the Lord and, while in boarding academy, he felt impressed to dedicate his life to work in Adventist education. He obtained a dual bachelor's degree in education and theology from River Plate Adventist University. After working at an Adventist academy in Argentina for two years, he decided to pursue graduate studies at Southern Adventist University, where he graduated in 2007 with a master's in education.

The day after graduating from SAU, he and Cristine Azevedo celebrated their wedding ceremony. God has blessed their family by adding Dallan (10) and Kian (8), two sweet boys who are dedicated to God. Fernando continued to serve as a teacher, principal, and administrator within the Adventist educational system, where he still serves today. He has worked for the Arizona, Hawaii, and Nevada-Utah conferences. He recently graduated from Andrews University with a doctoral degree in education.

Currently Fernando is serving as director of education for the Nevada-Utah Conference. One of his favorite Bible verses is, "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope" (Romans 15:4, NIV).