



Celebrating the Pacific Union President’s Life of Ministry and Service

Dr. Ricardo Graham, president of the Pacific Union Conference, is retiring after 47 years of ministry. Elder Graham has been an incredible leader, friend, and colleague, who will be greatly missed by us all.

Stepping Up to the Call

Ricardo was in the eighth grade when he accepted Jesus during an altar call at Cobo Hall in Detroit, Michigan. George Vandeman was the evangelist at that series of meetings in 1963, and when he made the call, a young Ricardo and his mother responded. Ricardo continued with his Bible studies and was baptized in 1964 at the City Temple Seventh-day Adventist church in Detroit.

Ricardo attended [Oakwood College](#), where his experience with Adventism deepened. His appreciation for Black history continued to increase, and he also felt a growing call to ministry. One night when he was home in Detroit, preparing to return to Oakwood, he had a real burden—an uneasiness. He got on his knees and fully surrendered, saying, “Lord, whatever you want me to do, OK, you win. I’ll do it. I’ll do it.” A peace that he had never before experienced settled over him. He was going to follow God and do whatever He asked of him. The leading impression was to become a pastor.



From Oakwood, Ricardo went to Andrews University and enrolled in the seminary, where he had a wonderful experience. The professors were challenging, and the social experiences were great. In 1975, he met the lovely Audrey Weir, who was from California. They married two years later.

Ricardo and Audrey started their ministry in the Lake Region Conference and then moved to Northern California in



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1984, where Audrey had a lifelong career as an educator. Ricardo moved from pastoring to administrative positions in the [Northern California Conference](#)—as executive secretary and then president.



In 2006 Elder Graham became executive secretary of the Pacific Union, and he has served as president since 2008. For 14 years, we have been blessed with his servant leadership, his “pastor’s heart,” his astute, savvy administrative style, and his unwavering dedication to often unpopular causes such as women in ministry and social justice. Bottom line: Ricardo Graham loves the Lord and he cares about people. And we love him for it!



Dr. Graham has lost none of his passion for the gospel! In his retirement he plans to do some writing, continue to preach, teach some classes for our colleges, finish his CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) and become a chaplain, play racquetball, travel with Audrey, spend time with his adult children, Jessica and Jonathan, and continue that promise he made all those years ago—to do whatever the Lord asks of him.

Thank you, Pastor Graham, for your ministry here in the Pacific Union. Thank you for your leadership and friendship. On behalf of a grateful church and all God’s people, we appreciate how you have so faithfully served in the Pacific Southwest. May God bless you and your family as your ministry continues in your retirement.



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“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”

- Isaiah 41:10