



June 15, 2016

Dear Hawai‘i Conference Members and Friends:

We greet you with the love of Christ, our Savior!

The 194th ‘Aha Pae‘aina of the Hawai‘i Conference met this last week, and we are grateful for the rich time we shared together with each other and with our God who calls us as partners together in Christ’s name. We also express our thanks to the delegates and visitors who participated so fully in our worship services, plenary sessions and times of fellowship, and our deep appreciation to the staff and members of Central Union Church, who welcomed and hosted us so warmly!

Although a summary of the ‘Aha Pae‘aina will appear in the next issue of *The Friend*, we felt that it would be helpful to write this letter both to keep the whole membership informed and to provide more information about a business item that generated good and intense discussion.

At the ‘Aha Makua, the business meeting of the Hawai‘i Conference, delegates unanimously approved the mission partnership with the South Seoul Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK). We were honored to have the moderator from the Presbytery and other representatives present with us to witness this and to share with us the work of the PROK.

The budget for the new fiscal year ending in June 2017 was passed. In discussion, delegates asked that more detail about the budget, as well as the Hawai‘i Conference Foundation budget, be provided to delegates in the future.

Delegates elected the following persons to the Conference Council: Iese Tuuao, Chairperson; Daniel Shimomura, Secretary; Wryen Kiwaha, At-large Youth/Young Adult; Suzanne Smith, Justice and Witness Missional Team Chair; and Elwood Kita, Stewardship Missional Team Chair. Also elected was Joyclynn Costa to the Hawai‘i Conference Foundation Board of Trustees.

The last of the major business items was a resolution, “Assessment and Strategic Plan for the Hawai‘i Conference.” The resolution, in summary, would direct the Conference Council to conduct an assessment of the “spiritual, organizational and financial health” of the Hawai‘i Conference and the “role and responsibility” of the Hawai‘i Conference Foundation. The decision to place the item on the agenda by the officers of the Conference Council was made the previous week after discussion with a group of persons who had written a letter requesting it.

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Before the start of discussion, the Chair, Iese Tuuao, announced that earlier that morning, as he and David Iha were preparing with the parliamentarian for the consideration of the resolution, they were made aware of a paragraph in the Hawai'i Nonprofit Corporations Act of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes that specifies how amendments may be made to the agenda.

*Unless one-third or more of the voting power is present in person or by proxy, the only matters that may be voted upon at an annual or regular meeting of members are those matters that are described in the meeting notice (Hawaii Revised Statutes, 414D-111(d)).*

After informing delegates of this requirement, the Chair then explained that with 134 delegates present, the one-third required to amend the agenda, or 154 out of 460 total delegates possible, had not been reached. Because of this, the resolution, which was introduced at the time of check-in at the 'Aha, could not be voted.

The Chair, however, allowed the resolution to be introduced by Vice-Chair David Iha, who explained that even though the vote could not take place, the concerns raised in the resolution would be addressed by the Conference Council.

The Chair, then, opened the floor for discussion. The comments were wide-ranging, from matters of parliamentary procedure to suggestions on how to implement the resolution, from comments about the issues facing the Conference to concerns that most delegates were unaware of what the issues were and unprepared for any discussion at all. Time was extended to allow as much discussion as possible.

Following discussion, Conference Minister Charles Buck addressed the plenary and expressed his appreciation for the comments that were offered and pledged to ensure that the Council hears and considers all of these as it moves forward toward addressing the issues raised in the resolution. He also promised to take time over the next months to visit with and listen to those who voiced concerns.

After thanks were given to our local church hosts of Central Union Church and an invitation extended from the Tri-Isle Association and Kamehameha Schools Maui for next year's 'Aha Pae'aina, the meeting was adjourned with commissioning prayer and blessing.

We acknowledge that many 'Aha attendees departed feeling as if there was unfinished business and a less than satisfying close to our gathering. We also realize that many of you who were not at the 'Aha may have heard about our time together and have questions. Our intention with this letter is to convey our commitment to continuing this conversation over the next year. We also encourage or invite your questions or comments about the 'Aha or any other topic. Finally, we express our hope that all of us will look for ways that the Spirit is working through all of this so that we can be faithful in our call as the church of Jesus Christ.

We are convinced that God is still speaking and always will. May we all have loving hearts, open minds and calm souls that are able to discern what God is saying to us in this new year.

In Christ,

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