



Honolulu, Hawai'i

Information to be submitted to the
United Nations for
King Abdullah II of Jordan's Initiative for
WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK

February 2013



WHAT IS PLANNED FOR THE FUTURE

CONTINUING ALL OF THE ABOVE programs there is now an initiative jointly sponsored by Belnet and TIAH to have small speaker groups available to those congregations that have had little or no experience with interfaith harmony. There is a challenge within the evangelical communities who are wary of interfaith activities. With the relationships that have been developing over the years, there is already a base for cooperation and education, and more involvement is evident.

Three invitations have been accepted:

- ◆ Pacific Bible University (an educational outreach of New Hope) will hold an invitational assembly in May, 2013. Representatives from the aforementioned organizations (Belnet, TIAH, etc.) will participate in an event sponsored by the Academic Dean.
- ◆ The United Methodist Annual Gathering in July 2013 will have an interfaith harmony program yet to be planned.
- ◆ The Seventh Day Adventist Congregation in Manoa Valley will invite a few Belnet individuals to its planning sessions to see if there is a good fit for future programming.

WE TRUST THAT THERE IS MORE TO COME

Common Ground for the Common Good Honolulu, Hawai'i

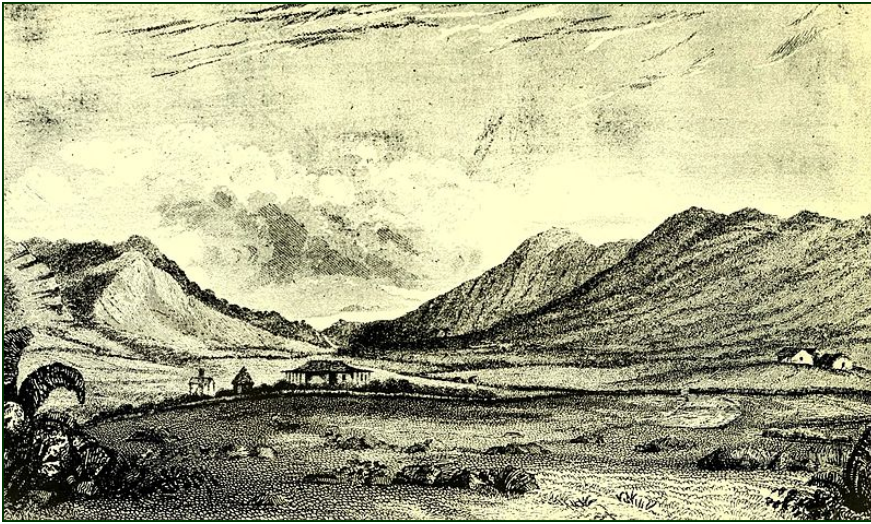
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WHAT HAS BEEN (AND IS CONTINUING)

Religious Services

IN 1964, THREE RELIGIOUS LEADERS in Honolulu were energized by the publications from the Second Vatican Council being held in Rome (1962-1965) and planned a joint religious service set on the evening before Thanksgiving Day, a secular holiday in the United States, celebrated on the last Thursday of November each year. The prayer service began with Christians and Jews the first year. As each subsequent year came around the planning committee added other religious groups, all along

the Nuʻuanu corridor in Honolulu. Within five years there were twelve discreet churches or temples participating. On the twentieth anniversary the group has expanded to include thirty discreet groups. By 2007, the group included the original members plus the small Muslim community of Honolulu.



Nuʻuanu Valley in 1840
Photo Courtesy Wikipedia Commons

This celebration now holds the record of being the longest running interreligious service, never having missed a time since its inception, each year rotating its chairmanship and each year expanding its outreach into the community. It designates a collection to be given to a group chosen by the planning committee.

In addition there are now at least ten additional interfaith services held in areas of the islands more convenient to attend, based on the same purpose of shared prayer, meditation, and music for interfaith harmony, yearning for peace in the world.



“new participants” who had not gone to events with a notable religious title with those “veterans” who were comfortable in the religious sector, the new initiatives are growing well.

INTERFAITH CONVERSATION is a weekly half-hour television program shown on Olelo TV (Hawaiʻi’s community channels on television) each Saturday morning and repeated at unpredicted late evening hours. It has been running for four years: the first year with Dr. Saleem Ahmed, founder of Belnet, as the host. It has continued with Dr. Joan Chatfield, M.M. as moderator. On the positive side the program gives visibility to various representatives in the religious community. On the negative side there has been a challenge to include evangelical Christians who often choose not to participate.

WHAT IS PLANNED FOR THE FIRST WEEK OF FEBRUARY 2013

SEPARATE DOCUMENTATION is included for two events:

- ◆ The All Believers Network program on February 2, 2013 held at the Honpa Hongwanji Social Hall.
- ◆ The Pacific Buddhist Academy presented its peace program on February 9, 2013.

discreet items have grown into projects and activities that continue)

SEICHO-NO-IE organized an event for its members which broadened their responses to the wider religious communities, calling on those active in the All Believers Network and The Interfaith Alliance Hawai'i to come and share with their members. Relationships began then which continue to this day.

The HAWAII FORGIVENESS PROJECT flows from the initiative of Nelson Mandela, as described in detail at the international gathering for the Parliament of the World's Religions in 1999 held in Capetown, South Africa. Honolulu initiated a Forgiveness Project which meets regularly each month and holds an annual day-long event, usually in August, where an organization, an individual and a 'situation' are raised up for recognition. The Hawai'i Forgiveness Project remains a loosely organized group, without membership or dues, but a genuinely committed gathering of those who believe both Mandela's and the Dalai Lama's emphasis that forgiveness is essential to a life worth living.

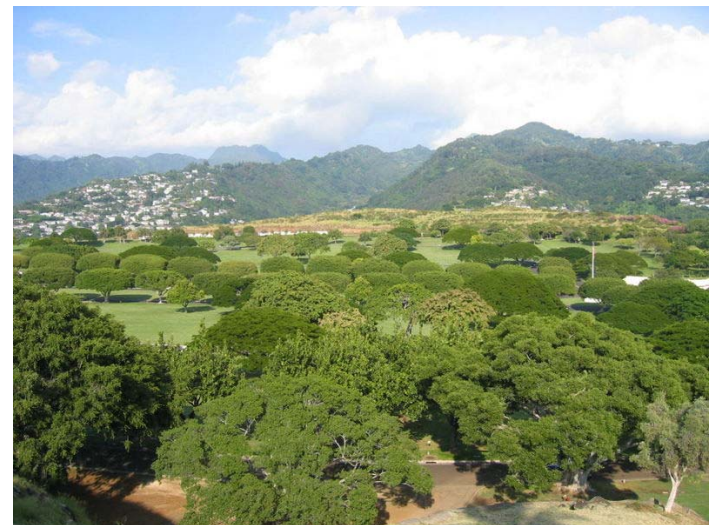
The VOYAGE OF ALOHA COMMUNITY brought together participants from Belnet and TIAH, along with the Joseph Campbell Foundation and the World Business Academy to hold a far-ranging event in 2011. Its outreach touched many who had not participated in the more "organized religious events" mentioned above and drew them into an experience of interfaith harmony which was palpable. Several individual initiatives from that event are currently being planned. Because of the mixture of the

Shared Organizations

(This section identifies those groups which have a continual presence in Hawai'i, each with their own leadership)

THE HAWAII COUNCIL OF CHURCHES first gathered only Protestant members, beginning in 1927. As time and interfaith activity became more common, the Catholics were invited to join in 1959. During that span of years some evangelical members joined in activities that included:

- ◆ Biennial orientation programs for new clergy coming to work in Hawai'i
- ◆ The annual Easter Sunrise Service held annually at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, known locally as Punchbowl and to the Hawaiian's as "*Puowaina*," the "Hill of Sacrifice."
- ◆ Various activities to support shared church events: bazaars, fund raisers, and other such social activities



The National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific
Photo Courtesy Wikipedia Commons

In 1994, the Council disbanded and kept only a small group to carry on the funding of projects, which were then shared with other ecumenical and interfaith organizations.

This group holds quarterly meetings and directs its funds for distribution to The Interfaith Alliance Hawai'i. It also continues to sponsor and organize the Punchbowl Service each Easter Sunday.



THE INTERFAITH ALLIANCE HAWAII (TIAH), includes all willing designated religious groups and was organized in 1996 and affiliated with the Interfaith Alliance in Washington, D.C., which was organized by Dr. Welton Gaddy. TIAH meets monthly and supports several island-wide activities. Its current active participants are Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, Buddhist, Quaker, and has an advisory council that also includes Muslims and Unitarian Universalists.

THE ALL BELIEVERS NETWORK (BELNET) started in 2003 and has held monthly meetings arranged around a theme: sharing one's faith, sharing cultural difference and convergences, responses to the writings of Lao Tzu from different faith perspectives. Annually, Belnet has held a conference, one of which is being replicated this February as a tribute to the consistency of the organization's efforts to raise up inclusion over exclusion.



HAWAII CONFERENCE OF RELIGIONS FOR PEACE (HCRP) was organized in the mid-1980s at the Church of Perfect Liberty in Honolulu and included ten different religious groups. Following the patterns of the World Conference (WCRP) and Dr. William Vendley, the organization proclaimed its Hawaiian identity and sponsored an annual prayer service in October which is now in its twenty-second year.

THE INTERFAITH OPEN TABLE meets on the first Wednesday of each month featuring a guest speaker from the broad community of believers and allows this small group to share happenings in greater Honolulu. The material is audio recorded and posted on a website. After several years of regular operation, an additional group was begun on the other side of the island of Oahu, the Windward side, which meets at noon. Some of the speakers are repeat participants, others are single presenters. Along with the All Believers Network this means that there are conversational presentations at 7:00 am, at noon and at 7:00 pm once each month. Those organizing these meetings are working toward keeping an archive of the presenters either audio or video.

Interfaith Initiative

(Begun by a few within the identified organizations, these