

1 I will stop right here, and then I'm
2 going to pass on to Reverend Radigan David to do his
3 own piece, whatever he is ready to talk about. We
4 don't have a topic in here, so we are just going to
5 talk about things that we feel like God lay it on
6 our heart to talk about that will help you and us
7 assimilate into this community. Reverend?

8 REVEREND DAVID: Thank you, Robert, and
9 as this is a conference of Micronesian voices, it is
10 only appropriate that I start my statements with the
11 usual traditional and honorific statements, and I
12 will say that in Pohnpeian. (Speaks in foreign
13 language.)

14 And that's sort of how I think we are
15 going to have to start off since I think there is a
16 reason why we weren't given any topic. When I was
17 given the piece of paper that -- the sample
18 questions that we were supposed to be thinking about
19 yesterday, I quickly put it aside because I felt
20 like the church that I serve wasn't doing enough to
21 respond to any of those questions. So I am going to
22 try to address those questions in an indirect term.

23 Just to start off, my name is Radigan
24 David, and I am a graduate of UH, University of
25 Hawaii at Hilo, and one of the -- I guess to start

1 off, one of the disadvantages of youth, I guess, I
2 think you probably all noticed I got moved up over
3 here by my elder brother here because he wanted me
4 to go first.

5 My field of study when I was at UH was
6 biology, engineering and biology, so you are
7 probably asking yourself why is that guy up there on
8 a panel for church leaders? And the answer is, my
9 story that I like to tell, and for those of you that
10 know the stories in the bible, the story of Samuel,
11 he got called by God, what? Three times? I got
12 slapped on the head a few times by God, hey. And
13 the explanation for that is I was here, I graduated
14 from school, I went home, and I taught at the high
15 school for four years and decided to come back out
16 to Hawaii because I think once you are in Hawaii,
17 Hawaii gets stuck in your blood.

18 So I decided to come back out, and then
19 there was this group of Pohnpeians that always
20 worshipped at Central Union Church, that big church
21 with that great green lawn on Beretania Street, and
22 this group decided that they were going to start a
23 worship group, and the first meeting we had, if I
24 remember right, I think we had 35 or 37 people that
25 saw the need for a center for Pohnpeians to gather

1 and to be able to worship in their lands.

2 And since I am the starting speaker, I
3 think I am going to have to say that the communities
4 back in the homeland in Pohnpei, I am going to speak
5 in Pohnpei, everything centers around the church.
6 Birthdays, promotions, any gatherings, any parties,
7 should we say, happened around the church. Funerals
8 are a big thing. They happen around the church
9 first. So when Pohnpeians migrate to the Hawaii or
10 the rest of the United States, we lose touch with
11 our culture in a sense because we don't have a home
12 church.

13 So the idea was to have a church gather
14 and worship in their native tongue, and we were very
15 fortunate in that there were some very receptive
16 members of Central Union Church because they were
17 either missionaries or they actually worked in the
18 fields in Micronesia in Pohnpei and Chuuk, so they
19 allowed us to start a worship service. From 37
20 people, today on an average Sunday we average 200
21 plus people every Sunday, and I am glad to say that
22 they are all here.

23 We started -- we requested a reverend to
24 come from Pohnpei, a very distinguished reverend
25 from Pohnpei. He was the conference minister of the

1 churches in Pohnpei. So when the crowd showed up, I
2 said, all right, they showed up because Reverend
3 Lorin is here. So to make the long story short, he
4 left in October of last year, and I was really
5 scared that that first Sunday after he left that
6 there wouldn't be anybody in the pews, but that was
7 another lesson that I was taught that it wasn't me
8 or it wasn't Reverend Lorin that they were coming
9 for. They were coming to hear the word of God in
10 their native tongue and then, of course, to meet
11 their fellow Pohnpeians.

12 So every Sunday our Pohnpeian church
13 becomes sort of like a community center. We have a
14 worship service, yes, but in the middle of that
15 worship service there is a time for announcements,
16 so if you ever wanted to meet anybody that's
17 Pohnpeian that's passing through, that's here on
18 medical referral, that's where to go at eleven
19 o'clock on Sunday, because that's where all the
20 announcements are made.

21 And when I was preparing to sit in front
22 of you this morning, this afternoon, I thought about
23 bringing all the different hats that I wear. I
24 think Robert mentioned it. I have hats that tell
25 bus driver, taxi driver, tour guide, referral agent,

1 everything. I think that's why we don't have a
2 topic in our talk today because we do everything in
3 the church from trying to preach the word of God
4 from the bible, we also have to deal with all the
5 issues of survival.

6 And I am really glad to see all the
7 service providers that are here, but I think in
8 actuality before the Pohnpeians or the Chuukese or
9 the Micronesians come to see you, they probably come
10 to see us first, and it's really encouraging for me
11 to see and to be able to network and to be able to
12 see faces that I can refer people to when they come
13 to me because that's basically what the church ends
14 up being. We as pastors end up being referral
15 agents, and I mentioned earlier that we don't -- we
16 feel like we can't do enough because we don't have
17 the resources or the expertise even to deal with all
18 the survival issues that come up in the church, in
19 our congregations, so conferences like this are
20 really great because, you know, although I value the
21 information that we get from the panelists, I think
22 I value even more the networking and the
23 interactions that we have in the audience during
24 break time and break out sessions.

25 And I wanted to sort of give you an idea

1 of how our church works, and before I do that, since
2 this is the afternoon, I'm not sure whose idea it
3 was to put pastors in the late afternoon after
4 lunch. Thank you, Dr. Hanlon. We have a hard
5 enough time keeping our congregation awake in the
6 morning, and here we have to deal with a crowd
7 that's already had lunch and in the late afternoon.

8 But I think what I wanted to share from
9 my perspective as somebody that was sort of pushed
10 into the field of the ministry, I say pushed because
11 when it first came up, I said, no, I'm going to wait
12 until I turn fifty or sixty or something. I have
13 always had in the back of my mind that I was going
14 to do some ministry work, you know? And I always
15 thought when I get old, I am going to do it. But I
16 got pushed into it somehow. I think that's, you
17 know, for those of us who believe, I think that's
18 the work of the Lord that says, hey, you know, you
19 have no choice, go ahead and do it.

20 PASTOR LORIN: Amen.

21 REVEREND DAVID: But it has its
22 advantages, and at the same time, it has its
23 disadvantages, and let me bring up, I think I am
24 going to bring it up here since I have sort of the
25 soap box. One of the best messages I saw this

1 morning in the panel was of those young Micronesian
2 women that were sitting up there. I know they had a
3 lot of good information to share, but the one I
4 valued the most was that story that they said
5 without saying anything at all, that they were young
6 Micronesian women that made it.

7 And I know they have aspirations to go a
8 little further, but I think if we can show that
9 group of -- that panel to our young Micronesians
10 that are here, that are back home, I think that will
11 be a stronger message than anything that we can say,
12 that these are young Micronesian women that actually
13 made it, lawyers, you know, master's in education,
14 and I think that's amazing, and that's what the
15 church sort of tries to do in a sense.

16 One of the difficulties I face is
17 because I look so young, and I'm not as young as I
18 look, by the way, one of the difficulties I face as
19 a pastor pastoring a congregation, of course, just
20 to give you an idea of the demographics, I think
21 that's one of the questions on the papers that I
22 saw, was the congregation, what makes up the
23 congregation that I serve? Of the 200 people,
24 majority of them are young kids, but, of course, we
25 have a lot of elderly people, and there are people

1 that come from different parts of the island in
2 Pohnpei. It is almost like the different islands of
3 Chuuk. They come from different churches, different
4 backgrounds, and different church practices, and we
5 have to sort of meld all of that together into one
6 service. That gets kind of difficult sometimes.

7 I'm not sure if you are looking in the
8 paper, I don't know if they listed my name under
9 there, and if you see the name of our church, it is
10 called the Pohnpei Fellowship Ministry, and the
11 story behind that that I am going to share with you
12 is in starting a church, of course, we have our ties
13 to the home church, and sometimes that's good, and
14 sometimes that's not so good.

15 So in picking a name, we tried to pick a
16 name that would sort of tie along with what, just as
17 was mentioned this morning, we were trying to forge
18 a relationship that was different, so we call it a
19 fellowship, slash, ministry because we wanted to be
20 sort of autonomous in a sense from the home church
21 while at the same time recognizing our ties, and we
22 were forging something that was really completely
23 different, and I think that's the reason why we can
24 exist in Hawaii, because we were -- we were able to,
25 although we respect and we abide by a lot of the

1 rules that our own churches do, we are sort of given
2 freedom to adapt to the new challenges that we face.

3 And speaking for myself as a pastor, one
4 of the disadvantages is how do I counsel a couple
5 that are senior to me? In our language and in our
6 culture, just to touch on Robert's comment about
7 there's no in Pohnpeian, there's two versions of the
8 Pohnpeian language. One we call the honorific
9 version which is used when you are talking to
10 someone that's older than you or somebody that's
11 higher ranking than you in the culture, and in that
12 culture and in that language, there is no word for
13 no.

14 So if I am sitting here, and the chief
15 walks up and says, hey, you know what? That really
16 expensive calculator that you have, I want it, you
17 can't say no because there's no term to say no. And
18 it sounds really funny, but that's the kind of
19 culture that we need to deal with. So how do I
20 counsel or how do I advise a couple that walks into
21 my office and asks for things that I know sometimes
22 I have to tell them no, or sometimes I have to tell
23 them, you know, that's not possible when you are
24 living in Honolulu?

25 I think all of the problems that we are

1 facing, and I think somebody mentioned earlier, all
2 of the problems that we are facing have been
3 historically proven to be things that happen when
4 cultures move into different cultures.

5 One of the issues that I as a parent
6 want to address today would be me being a Pohnpeian
7 person, a Pohnpeian man and a Pohnpeian father think
8 that my kids are Pohnpeian kids. And I know it
9 might upset some of our elder Micronesians that are
10 here, but I am going to make the statement anyway.
11 I think about my two Pohnpeian girls as Pohnpeian
12 girls, but in reality, they are not. They are
13 growing up in a system in America. They are
14 American the way they think is American, and whether
15 we like it or not, our kids that are growing up
16 here, although they might have some influence from
17 our culture, all of the things that they have to
18 deal with in their lives is American.

19 So values, if we don't as parents
20 instill our cultural values, our kids are American
21 whether we like it or not. And when we are on the
22 issue, which is really a touchy subject, about
23 discipline, when I am going to discipline my kids
24 because I think I am a Pohnpeian man, and I am going
25 to discipline them this way, they are not looking at

1 it the same way I am looking at it because they are
2 American.

3 And I know a lot of our elder citizens
4 from Pohnpei, from Micronesia, don't like that
5 statement, but I think that's a fact that we need to
6 deal with. We have to be honest and we have to be
7 forthright enough to know that our kids, the way
8 they think, the way they process things is American.
9 They are going to an American school system, their
10 friends are American kids, and unless we
11 specifically make an effort to instill in them our
12 cultural values, we are going to have to deal with
13 them as we are dealing with Americans because they
14 are Americans by the way they are raised, and that's
15 a conscious decision that a parent, a Micronesian
16 parent has to make.

17 Just to give you an example, I have two
18 daughters. One is in high school. I told you I
19 wasn't that young. One is in high school, and one
20 is in intermediate school. The first one, although
21 she grew up here, she was one when we moved out,
22 speaks and understands Pohnpeian, and she is really
23 fluent. She has a little accent when she speaks
24 Pohnpeian, she can speak it.

25 I made a conscious decision on my second

1 child that I had to start teaching her English at
2 home because she was falling behind in school
3 because I was speaking Pohnpeian in my house. So we
4 as a couple decided we were going to speak English
5 to our second child so that she can be better fitted
6 in the school system. Whether that was a good
7 choice to make, I don't know. I don't think it was,
8 but it was a necessity at the time. Of course,
9 there were days where I tried to say this is a
10 Pohnpeian speaking day, and I don't want to hear you
11 unless you speak Pohnpeian, which is kind of
12 difficult for my kids once in a while.

13 But I think those are the things, issues
14 that we as Micronesians that are living in Hawaii, I
15 think we need to bring them up. We don't like to
16 hear it. We don't like to hear the fact that we are
17 losing our culture, but we have to bring it up
18 because if not, we are going to lose our culture.
19 Parents have to make that conscious choice to say,
20 hey, I need to teach my kid English for him or her
21 to make it in school, and those are the issues that
22 I think are really important. Those are issues.

23 I remember counseling a father that was
24 having discipline problems with his child, a teenage
25 girl that he was having issues with. He almost even

1 went to jail because he spanked his daughter, I
2 guess, a little bit too much. We will leave that up
3 to the experts to decide what is spanking and what
4 is abuse. But he was having a real issue with it
5 because in his mind, a Micronesian girl shouldn't be
6 doing the stuff that that girl was doing, and in
7 that girl's mind, her father was abusive because
8 that's what she learns in school. And I as a pastor
9 have to sort of find a link between those two worlds
10 and to make that life and that family get together.
11 I am glad to report that the girl is back in the
12 home. You know, they are carrying on.

13 But those are issues that I think we
14 need to face, and I think since our own lives and
15 back on the islands and in Micronesia are so related
16 to the church and so uniquely tied to the church, I
17 think we as pastors have a really unique and very
18 daunting task in trying to see how we can at the
19 same time trying to deal with survival issues, also
20 deal with social issues, and most of the times we
21 are dealing with survival issues. How do I pay my
22 rent? Which bill do I pay for? Do I pay for my car
23 insurance, or do I pay for my electric bill? And we
24 as pastors have to deal with those issues, and I
25 think that's one of the reasons why our topic today

1 doesn't have a -- I mean our discussions today
2 doesn't have a topic because we deal with things
3 across the board.

4 And one of the benefits I think I
5 mentioned earlier, the disadvantage of being a youth
6 person in this line of work, one of the benefits,
7 and I know it came up yesterday, it came up earlier
8 today and it even came up in the break out session
9 that I was in, is that we have to figure out a way
10 to involve our youth in all of this work that we are
11 doing, and one of the advantages that I have is
12 because when I stand up in front of that church, all
13 of these young kids look at me, what is that young
14 boy doing up there trying to preach to me?

15 And I think that would be a positive to
16 sort of tell our kids, I can speak as a first
17 generation immigrant that it is my responsibility to
18 instill in my kids the same desire that I had in
19 coming out here. One of the problems that I see in
20 Pohnpeian population is that the first generation of
21 immigrants that are here think that they have
22 already made it to Hawaii, to America, and that's
23 it, so they don't push their kids hard enough to go
24 to school.

25 I think we heard yesterday the sad

1 statistics of not enough Micronesian kids going to
2 college, and I have a really unscientific theory
3 that the reason for that is the parents that are
4 here as the first generation parents, we are not
5 pushing our kids enough because we think we have
6 already made it, we already got into Hawaii, we are
7 living in Hawaii, so we don't push our kids as much
8 as our parents did when we were going to school in
9 Chuuk, in Pohnpei or Kosrae, and I think that's a
10 discussion that needs to happen.

11 I am really glad and I am really
12 thankful to the organizing committee for this
13 conference to include the church in this discussion
14 because I think the church needs to be involved in
15 these discussions. All of the topics that came up
16 from the first day all the way to the session
17 earlier this morning ties in with the church
18 somehow, but that's because that's what our culture
19 is. The church is a very vital part of our lives.

20 Okay, how much time do I have?

21 PASTOR LORIN: I am trying to look
22 around if somebody is keeping the time for us.

23 REVEREND DAVID: Okay, so I am going to
24 end by just saying that I have some -- I think I
25 have told a few people that I talked to in the

1 breaks and the break out sessions some really
2 interesting and some really funny stories, and they
3 are really small minor little things, but I think it
4 speaks to the kind of difficulties we face as a
5 nation moving into another culture.

6 I want to start with the good news. The
7 good news was when I first got involved with all of
8 these Micronesia issues, I used to get calls to go
9 and help translate things at public schools in
10 Hawaii. I got a call to go to Jarrett because there
11 was these kids that couldn't understand English. So
12 I said, sure, I will be glad to help. I walk into
13 the classroom, and the first look I looked at the
14 kids, and I went, oh, no, I'm in trouble because I
15 could tell those were Chuukese kids.

16 And another call I got, I got a call
17 from Kaimuki High School, the vice-principal calls
18 me, oh, we need to send this letter to the parents
19 explaining truancy, if you can come and help us
20 translate into the Micronesian language so the
21 parents can understand how important it is to get
22 their kids to school. Of course, I get there, and
23 they want the brochures translated into Marshallese.

24 I am really happy to report that within
25 the very short time that I have been here since '93

1 or '95 to today, I don't get those kinds of calls
2 any more because I give the Department of Education
3 credit for figuring out the differences between the
4 Micronesian cultures. (Inaudible) the Department of
5 Education, I don't get those kinds of calls any more
6 because now they can tell the difference. And
7 people always ask me how can you tell the difference
8 between a Pohnpeian, a Chuukese, and a Kosraean?
9 And my reply has always been in Hawaii, how can you
10 tell the difference between Chinese and Korean?
11 It's the same thing. We don't know how, but we do.
12 And I think those are the kind of stories we like to
13 hear.

14 And then lastly one of the complaints
15 that I got from a teacher, there were -- I think the
16 child was being reprimanded for some reason, and the
17 teacher was getting upset because when she was
18 talking to the child, the child couldn't hold her
19 gaze, the child wasn't looking at her face, and in
20 her mind, that was being really disrespectful. She
21 is trying to pass on this information to this child,
22 and the child wasn't paying attention.

23 And I think I mentioned it a few times
24 earlier that that in the Pohnpei culture is a sign
25 of respect, when a person of authority addresses

1 you, you don't look them in the face because that's
2 rude, and that's what that child was doing, and that
3 was really upsetting to the teacher because the
4 teacher thought that child wasn't paying attention.
5 And right now we can laugh about it, it's really
6 funny, it's a really small story, but I think those
7 are the kind of things that are really important for
8 to us know.

9 I get in trouble a lot with my friends
10 when we are having discussions because they ask me a
11 question, and I say yes but not saying anything,
12 just by moving my eyebrows, and in my mind I'm
13 thinking I said yes. So then they come back,
14 Radigan, what are you doing? You know, we are
15 waiting for a response. And I'm thinking to myself,
16 I said yes. But, you know, we don't think about
17 stuff like that, a little move of the eyebrow means
18 yes, and for the western mind is thinking, that guy
19 is not paying attention, and I think it's those
20 little things.

21 And I am here to say that the church,
22 representing the church, I feel like we don't do
23 enough to help the Pohnpeians that are coming
24 through. I am glad to say that I think in the
25 Micronesian entities and the Micronesian groups that

1 are coming, we are fortunate to not have so much
2 problems with Pohnpeians because I think that has
3 nothing to do with the Pohnpeians being better
4 equipped or anything. I think that just has a lot
5 to do with the amount or the population of people
6 that are moving in. We are not moving in here as
7 fast as the Marshallese or the Chuukese, so you
8 don't see the numbers. It has nothing to do with
9 who's better or who's more prepared. I think it
10 just has to do with the numbers, and we are
11 fortunate in that Pohnpeians don't see as much of a
12 population in the shelters. There are Pohnpeians in
13 the shelters, but we don't see as much as the
14 Chuukese or the Marshallese, and that's just because
15 of numbers. I don't think it has nothing to do -- I
16 don't think it has anything to do with anything
17 else. It's just population, I think.

18 And I am up here trying to tell you that
19 I think the church can do a lot more. I wish we
20 could do a lot more, but I am grateful to be here to
21 be able to connect with people that I can refer
22 those questions to and (inaudible) all right. Thank
23 you.

24 PASTOR LORIN: And you asked me why they
25 have church as one of the best ways to communicate?

1 I think Reverend Radigan tells us exactly why one of
2 the best ways to reach the Micronesian population is
3 through the faith based programs, in this situation
4 we are talking about the church.

5 I don't have much time left, therefore,
6 I am going to go ahead and move, I am going to move
7 over to Father or Reverend Akendo Onamwar. He is
8 from Chuuk. Reverend?

9 REVEREND ONAMWAR: (Speaks in a foreign
10 language.) Good morning, everybody.

11 PASTOR LORIN: Morning.

12 REVEREND ONAMWAR: I purposely greeted
13 you in that by saying that because this is to me a
14 new day for the Micronesians in Hawaii, so I think
15 the best way for me to start is to tell you my
16 story. I graduated from HPU back in 1978. I feel
17 ancient already sitting next to Radigan. I went
18 back home, and I started working with my government,
19 and I came out here in 1992 as a patient attendant,
20 and that's when I saw the need for the few Chuukese
21 that were here at that time, their need to start a
22 church. So in 1994, that's when I came out because
23 I went back, and I came out again in 1994, and I
24 have stayed here since 1994.

25 And as Radigan stated, the first place