

Whistleblower Investigative Committee Statement about Jonathan S. Park [Pak]

Richard Buessing
April 27, 2018

The Joint Whistleblower Investigative Committee was formed at the request of President Buessing, the HSA Board of Directors and the National Council to investigate claims by Mr. Jonathan Park, a former Board member, of illegal and unethical activities in the administration of church finances. We believed the charges were very serious and deserved a full investigation.

The members of our Committee were Noah Ross (National Council, Committee Chair), David Rendel (District Pastor, Committee Vice-chair), Alan Jessen (National Council Chair), Sarah Oben (National Council Vice-Chair), Terry Yamane (National Council Secretary), Kevin Thompson (District 11 Pastor), John Jackson (District 9 Pastor), Manoj Jacobs (District 3 Pastor) and Eugene Harnett (National Council).

Over the past six months we reviewed all the relevant documents, contracts and legal opinions numbering in the hundreds of pages. Each committee member invested many hours in regular meetings and discussions. We received formal statements from both Dr. Kim and Mr. Park. The Committee also received numerous and extensive related documents detailing legal agreements, legal opinions, Board meeting minutes and other items. Weekly Committee meetings were held electronically to discuss our progress in the investigation and many interviews were held, including members of the Board of Directors, Mr. Park and Dr. Ki Hoon Kim.

We were not pressured or restricted in our inquiry, and in the end we have reached a unanimous finding. A detailed report was submitted to the Board.

The Investigation committee found no evidence of illegal or unethical behavior on the part of Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, the HSA Board, or members of the HSA staff. To the contrary, we found that the HSA Board paid careful attention to their legal and financial duties, and regularly received external legal and financial advice. In issues regarding the New Yorker Hotel and the Washington Times, we found that although there are financial challenges, the church administration is and has been addressing them in a professional manner.

We recognized the initial shock and great concern the complaint raised among the church membership regarding the possible mismanagement of church assets. This underscored the Committee's resolve to achieve independence in our investigation and to be thorough.

Because we were able to look closely at the governance of the Board, we could ascertain the level to which they were acting with responsibility or not as stewards of church assets. To many extents we were relieved to find them being remarkably diligent and deliberate in managing our church assets.

Still, we pursued three areas for recommendation to the Board: 1) professionalism; 2) communication; and 3) representation. Our committee reviewed these issues and made several valuable recommendations to the Board that we believe will improve their actions in the future.

The Committee wishes to thank Continental Director Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, National President Rev. Richard Buessing, and the Board of Directors for investing in this Whistleblower process and supporting the work we did, by providing funds for our independent legal counsel and for opening the Board's records for our review.

Finally, we thank our membership at large for their patience during this rather long investigative process. We acted on your behalf and felt empowered to scrutinize possible wrongdoing. In this, we strove to look without bias and, thus, rebuild trust.

We believe our American Family is going to remain strong going forward from this and fit to the challenges of growth around the corner.