Strategic Initiative #4: Gifts and wisdom of the next generation. Ensure that people under 40 are welcomed, inspired and free to give full expression of their faith (even if it looks different).

1 Timothy 4:12
Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

Numbers 13:25-28, 30-33, 14:6-10
At the end of forty days they returned from spying out the land. And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the Israelites in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, “We came to the land to which you sent us; it flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. Yet the people who live in the land are strong, and the towns are fortified and very large…”

But Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.” Then the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against this people, for they are stronger than we.” So they brought to the Israelites an unfavorable report of the land that they had spied out, saying, “The land that we have gone through as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people that we saw in it are of great size. There we saw the Nephilim; and to ourselves we seemed like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.”

And Joshua and Caleb, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes and said to all the congregation of the Israelites, “The land that we went through as spies is an exceedingly good land. If the LORD is pleased with us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. Only, do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they are no more than bread for us; their protection is removed from them, and the L ORD is with us; do not fear them.” But the whole congregation threatened to stone them.

Guiding Image: Flowing Lava

The Hawaiian goddess Pele appears in an ancient chant as “she who shapes the sacred land,” reigning over fire, wind, lightning and volcanoes. Her force and influence are still respected in contemporary society. Like the refiner’s fire (Malachi 3:2), her lava flows purify and then generate new life.

Lava flows across land and into the water, burning what is above the surface and building onto the existing foundation. New growth springs out of lava in the form of the ‘ōhi‘a lehua tree, ablaze with red, orange and yellow blooms. New land builds up from the sea, waiting to break through the surface as something wholly new.
Context
Like churches nationwide, the HCUCC faces challenges attracting and nurturing the next generation. The landscape of what it means to be “church” continues to evolve as a new generation emerges to lead. Conversations with UCC youth and young adults throughout the islands revealed their strong desire to be accepted for who they are, to share their gifts with the church, to pursue social justice work and to assume leadership roles and responsibility (see Appendix D). Like Joshua and Caleb, they want to express their vision of the Promised Land (the future) and invite us to join them in the journey to get there. This initiative commits the Conference to understanding, empowering and resourcing the next generation in the work of building a diverse Christian community.

Initial Responsibility
Formation Missional Team