

July 15, 1985 11:30 p.m.

Herman T. Guerrero, President
Second CNMI Constitutional Convention
House of Taqa Convention Center
San Vicente, Saipan, CNMI

Dear President Guerrero,

This letter is addressed to all 24 delegates of the Second CNMI Constitutional Convention.

Your attitudes and conduct on Monday, July 15th (Day 28) have moved me to express my deep sympathy for those of you who appear to have been severely damaged by the influence of so many generations of forced rulership by nations you did not invite to your islands. Your anger, resentment, bitterness, hatred, disgust, hostility, indignation, rage and wrath were all clearly and undeniably expressed on the floor of the Convention. Anger for the sake of JUSTICE is acceptable in the eyes of God.

Your actions today clearly indicate to me a need to defend, protect and preserve your culture and identity through active use of your language, specifically Chamorro. I fully recognize the use of the English language in this Convention is intensely rejected because it represents a threat to your identity as Chamorros. I empathize with the tremendous fear you must be feeling. I am fully aware of the pain you are experiencing...I see it in your faces, I hear it in your voices, and I recognize it as you deal with painful memories and crucial issues that will shape your future.

I admire each and every one of you for having the courage to CHOOSE to take the responsibility for your own future and the future of your children. I especially respect those of you who are doing it for the second time. It shows me you have the willingness and desire to truly be self-governing.

To be self-governing means "not to be swayed or controlled by others" and "characterized by self-discipline or self-control." (American Heritage Dictionary, page 1113... so Delegate Dr. Kaipat will not have to look it up...). I ask you to examine your attitudes and conduct of today and determine for yourself if you think you have conducted yourselves in a "self-disciplined or self-controlled" manner.

Your Constitution is seven years old. If it were a child born seven years ago, that child would be entering puberty or adolescence right now. Those of you who formulated that Constitution are symbolic of its "parents." Those of you dealing with it for the first time are symbolic of "God-Parents", or parents of an adopted child. Do you feel your attitudes and actions reflect the tremendous degree of LOVE that it takes to be a parent?

Your Constitution was born as a result of the choice you made...conception was the Covenant. (Choosing eventual Commonwealth status by approving and accepting the Covenant is not like being governed under forced rulership.) Choosing to accept the Covenant was your acceptance of the responsibility that goes with being self-governing. All you need to do is ACCEPT IT.

Accepting it does not mean you must give up your own identity! You are Chamorro-Americans just like I'm Dutch-Irish-English-Cherokee Indian-American. Adding American does not take anything away from being Chamorro, it ADDS to what you already are. It multiplies your resources...it does not diminish them.

I salute each and every one of you...Chamorro, Carolinian and American Delegates and ask that you search your hearts diligently to remove your anger stored up from the past. Forgive the injustices; give them up so as not to perpetuate them. Accept your opportunity for a new beginning, willingly. Continue to be proud Chamorros and Carolinians and be proud to add and accept that you are also American.

I invite you to join me as an American; I welcome you as my fellow American and want you to benefit from being American just as my ancestors have provided that benefit that I now enjoy. Give it as a gift of love to your children...the gift of freedom and Democracy so they will never ever have to experience forced rulership by nations you did not invite to your islands.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be a guest in your Commonwealth and an observer at your historic Second CNMI Constitutional Convention.

Sincerely,

