

**Kalaupapa Sunday
Hawaii Conference – United Church of Christ (USA)**

Because of You, I Am

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This was written when I realized the impact that my brother, Paul, and sister-in-law, Winnie, had on my life. Their story continues to help me deal with my relationship with those around me.

How do we love our selves, others around us, and how we treat one another as human beings? Paul and Winnie's lives reflected the Great Commandment that Jesus left for us to ponder as his followers.

Because of you, I am a better person.
You have shown me the way of life;
to live on common ground with those around me!

Because of you, I am able to understand
how to live with others around me
who believe so differently than I!

Because of you, I am a better healer.
It matters not who you are or what you believe.
You taught me the value of all humans!

Because of you, I am more loving.
Your actions showed me how to love
myself, my neighbor, and my God!

Because of you, I am more hopeful.
I could never understand utter loneliness.
I still struggle to understand it fully!

Because of you, I am enlightened.
I only saw things dimly through foggy lens.
Now I see faith, hope and love abound!

Because of you, I am part of the world,
not despised, rejected or discarded
but a loving, created, precious being!

Because of you, I am whole.
Kalawao, Makenalua, Kalaupapa.
Mahalo!