



**Kahu Kalani Wong, KS Maui**

<sup>31</sup> A laila ‘ōlelo maila ‘o Iesū i ka po‘e Iudaio i mana‘o‘i‘o iā ia, Inā e ho‘omau ‘oukou ma ka‘u ‘ōlelo, a laila he po‘e haumāna ‘i‘o ‘oukou na‘u. <sup>32</sup> A e ‘ike auane‘i ‘oukou i ka ‘oia‘i‘o, a ‘o ka ‘oia‘i‘o e ku‘u aku iā ‘oukou.- Ioane 8:31-32

<sup>31</sup> So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly My disciples; <sup>32</sup> and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”- John 8:31-32

There are a number of days which commemorate freedom. At the beginning of July, the United States celebrates freedom from Britain. At the end of the month, La Hoihoi Ea commemorates Hawai‘i’s independence from Britain. On July 31, 1843, after five months of occupation, the Hawaiian flag was raised once again and control of the Kingdom was restored to Kamehameha III, who declared, “Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono” (The sovereignty of the land is perpetuated in righteousness). The most recent federal holiday enacted is Juneteenth recognizing the anniversary (June 19, 1865) of the announcement of General Order #3 proclaiming freedom for enslaved people in Texas.

In the 1800’s, leprosy took away the freedom for a number of individuals who were forcibly removed from their families. On January 3, 1865, the Act to Prevent the Spread of Leprosy” was enacted, and 1,000s were sent to the Kalaupapa Peninsula. There they were confined to start life anew among those who all suffered similar fates. In 1969, after sulfone drugs contained the bacillus which caused the disease, the patients were finally allowed to leave and live wherever they chose. Some stayed for they felt at home there. Last Thursday, the Kalaupapa Settlement celebrated Lei Hali‘a, the 53rd anniversary of the repeal of the law of separation. All the patients were in attendance to bless 1,500 lei and 5,000 ft of ti leaf lei for the burial sites and grave markers in honor and remembrance of loved ones buried there.

One of the gifts that I’ve had was spending time with the patients in this beautiful setting. I was truly honored to hear how, though constrained in their movements, they found freedom in Christ. Beginning with the first group of patients sent to Kalaupapa, who formed the first church within a year of their relocation, they found the truth of God’s word, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly My disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” May you too be set free from all that binds you.