



May 31, 2021

**Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches
Hawai'i Conference United Church of Christ**

1848 Nu'uano Avenue
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

Aloha e Luna Ho'omalua and members of the AHEC Board of Directors,

Over several weeks, the members of Puka'ana Congregational Church had the opportunity to read, review, and discuss the resolution of the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches (AHEC) being submitted to the General Synod, entitled: *A Resolution Encouraging to End 128 Years of War Between the United States of America and the Hawaiian Kingdom*. Following this period of review and conversation, our membership has unanimously agreed that we are opposed to the current Resolution as it is being submitted to the General Synod.

Firstly, our members recognize the continuing efforts of various individuals and organizations to educate the public concerning the history and political status of the Hawaiian Kingdom as a sovereign state under occupation since 1893. It is our concern, however, that not enough educational opportunities have taken place and it is reasonable to assume that delegates to the General Synod will not be prepared to make an informed decision about this resolution.

Secondly, our members are also aware that this resolution was submitted to the General Synod without the advice and consent of the member churches of the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches. We believe that AHEC member churches should have first had an opportunity to properly review, consider, and deliberate on this resolution; and, secondly, have been able to vote on the resolution at a meeting of the Association.

We recognize the precedent that was set by the United Church of Christ in 1993 when President Paul Sherry formally recognized the 100th anniversary of the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, and apologized for the complicity of the Church in that overthrow. This action would eventually lead to the Apology Resolution (Public Law 103-150) being adopted by Congress and signed by President Bill Clinton that same year.

Even so, the prevailing opinion of that time was that although the Hawaiian Kingdom government was illegally overthrown in 1893, that Hawai'i was a state of the United States of America regardless of the process that was followed to admit it to the union. Today, because of the scholarly and legal efforts that have been done, the prevailing opinion – at least in Hawai'i – seems to have changed. A great number of people have come to accept the legal and political status of the Hawaiian Kingdom as a sovereign state that continues to exist – but under the prolonged occupation of the United States.

In Hanz Holznagel's article about the Resolution on the UCC website, he begins with this statement: "Aside from the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, war may not be the first thing that

comes to mind when people think of Hawaii. Some Native Hawaiians in the United Church of Christ are asking people to think again.”

To say that the language used in this resolution carries much weight is an understatement – especially for those who are unaware of the history of Hawai‘i and the United States. Our history and our present political status is a deeply complex issue – and addressing the issue will require delegates to be educated about that issue in order to make an informed decision.

There is no doubt that the United Church of Christ would again set an important precedent if the General Synod were to adopt this resolution. However, in order for such an action to happen, our members believe that a collaborative process needs to take place. That process should begin with more educational opportunities being provided – at the conference and national settings of the denomination. And, secondly, the resolution needs to be brought back to AHEC’s membership to be able to properly discern and decide on whether or not they want to have such a resolution submitted in their name.

Our members have varying stances on the content of the resolution. This letter should not be so construed as to say that our church is opposed to the language of the resolution. Instead, our members recognize the seriousness of the language of the resolution and the matter being addressed by that resolution; and, believe that the correct process needs to be followed.

We thank you for hearing our concerns.

In Christ’s peace,

Puka‘ana Congregational Church