

Reflections on the Bicentennial

BY LAUREN BUCK MEDEIROS, PUNAHOU SCHOOL

I've just returned from a trip to Boston where a group from Hawai'i was privileged to participate in the bicentennial of the departure of the missionaries who came to Hawai'i. The experience was deeply moving and I've been invited to share some of my reflections.

Two hundred years ago, a group of courageous and faithful people left Boston, Massachusetts, headed for the "Sandwich Islands." They had no idea what kind of reception they would find—even the four Hawaiian young men traveling in their number had questions. Thomas Hopu had been gone 11 years, John Honoli'i had been

gone four years, William Kanui had been away 10 years, and Prince George Humehume for 14 years. All on board carried in their hearts the words spoken to them by the mission board leaders, "You will never forget [Obookiah], you will never forget his fervent love, his affectionate counsels, his many prayers and tears for you, and for his and your nation...you will remember it always and you will tell it to your kindred."

There were only two ministers in the group sailing to Hawai'i: Hiram Bingham and Asa Thurston had been ordained just days before the Thaddeus left Boston harbor.



Malia Ane and Lauren Buck Medeiros of Punahou School

The rest were Christian laypeople, skilled in the kinds of labor reflecting their aspirations and undoubtedly the advice of 'Ōpūkaha'ia and his kinsmen: two were teachers, one was a doctor, one a printer, and

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My Pilgrimage to God's Beloved Community

BY BECKY ASHIZAWA, MAKIKI CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Kalaupapa is bound by memories but if you are patient, the stories unfold. That was my experience during a recent 4-day "retreat" led by Phyllis Meighen of Kaua'i, Roxanne WhiteLight of Maui and Richard Miller of Kalaupapa's Kana'ana Hou Church.

Retreat is in quotation marks because there was nothing slow or leisurely about our daily pace. Pilgrimage is a better description of what we experienced. There were ample times of silence and pondering but these moments were guided by what we heard, saw, learned and prayed about. I found



Becky Ashizawa

myself thinking about exile and displacement, prompted by the history of this community. Though I have never been forcibly uprooted and banished, I think there are moments or seasons in our lives where we find ourselves shoved aside or diminished. This is how Kalaupapa spoke to me: asking me, "How do I do life in this new normal?" Or, "What is my kuleana among other displaced folk?" Kalaupapa prodded me to look at these questions in a non-theoretical way.

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Legacy

BY DAVID K. POPHAM, CONFERENCE MINISTER

I wrestle with telling my family's story. When I tell this story, I want to present who my family is, where



it has been, and some sense of the aspirations of the younger generation. What complicates things is that my family's past is problematic

for in my lineage you will find slave owners. What a legacy!

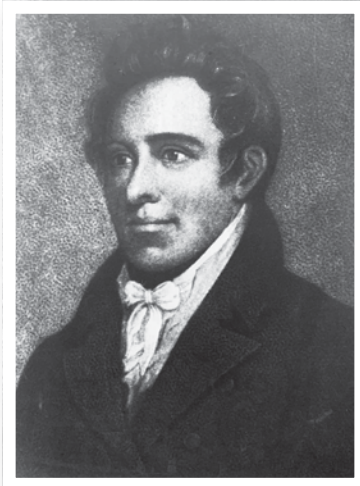
My frustration is that we have never talked about this as a family. Indeed, until I did my own sleuthing, I had only wondered and guessed what the Mississippi side of the family was about in the Pre-Civil War South. What frustrates me is that by remaining silent my family had no path to raise up and address the legacy of attitudes and ideology which still linger today.

Furthermore, we have no sense of the descendants of those people whom my ancestors worked as slaves. While we were not plantation owners, nevertheless, there was the small farm with African Americans' lives tied to it. What is the legacy their family lives with?

Along with owning slaves, my family was a religious family and I have gratitude for the faith they passed down to me. It is from this faith that I can critique my ancestral heritage and name its ugly parts. While I never owned a slave and recoil at that thought, my faith helps me to understand that I participate in, and am responsible

for, countering a legacy centered on racist thoughts and behavior.

The bicentennial observance of the arrival of the Congregational missionaries and their Hawaiian companions from the U.S. gives us time to pause and consider our heritage. Legacy stories have the power to elicit wisdom and responses in ways that the rote listing of facts does not. Like the story of my family, the story of Christianity in Hawai'i and of the Hawai'i Conference is complex and at times controversial for it is not only the story of the arrival



Henry 'Ōpūkaha'ia

of the Christian faith—it is also the story of the cultural mores the faith came wrapped in.

While we were not there when the missionaries arrived, or when the Hawaiian Kingdom was overthrown, we are the inheritors of that legacy. As with my family, our faith provides us the vantage point

for confession and grace. The narratives we share about our past frame the meaning we derive out of those experiences. As one person noted for another setting, telling the full story will be an act of courage as we examine our past — “the contested along with the comfortable, the complex along with the simple, the controversial along with the inspirational.”

Our need during this period of observance is to tell the complete story, even the parts that make us uncomfortable and invite ambiguity into our self-understanding. Our challenge is to ensure that all

voices are given time to speak and the respect to be heard. If we can do this, then I think we can honor both the aloha spirit of welcome which the Hawaiian culture extends and the best motivations of those early missionaries seeking to share the insights of the gospel.

Be a Friend of the Hawai'i Conference

Friends of the Conference, the annual campaign to support the full range of Hawai'i Conference ministries, gratefully accepts contributions throughout the year. In order to be credited for 2019, donations must be postmarked by December 31. Please prayerfully consider making an online donation or mailing a check made out to “HCUCC” to: 1848 Nu'uuanu Avenue, Honolulu, HI, 96817. Please be sure to include “Friends of the Conference” in the memo line. Thank you for being a Friend!



God is still speaking



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Phone: (808) 537-9516 or (800) 734-7610 (Neighbor Island Toll Free)

Fax: (808) 521-7196

E-mail: hcucc@hcucc.org

Contributing Writers: Becky Ashizawa, Lauren Buck Medeiros, Keiko D'Enbeau, and Phyllis Meighen

My UCC Connections

BY ANDREW BUNN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In 1987, I was a sophomore at Williams College in Massachusetts. Every day that year as I walked



up the hill to my classes from my dormitory, I would pass an obelisk topped with a globe in a clearing among some beautiful trees. It took

many months of walking past this monument before curiosity got the better of me and I went over to take a closer look. What I discovered was the Haystack Monument. The monument marks the spot where, in 1806, five students of Williams College, who were engaged in an outdoor prayer meeting overlooking the Hoosic River valley, took refuge from a sudden thunderstorm beneath a haystack. During that moment of refuge, the students determined to form a mission organization to send Protestant Christian missionaries around the world. Four years later, those students help lead the formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). ABCFM missionaries who arrived in Hawai'i in 1820 formed the Hawaiian Association of Ministers and Churches in 1823—which would become the Hawaiian Evangelical Association in 1853—and then the Hawai'i Conference of the United Church of Christ in 1959.

Little did I know as I walked past the Haystack Monument that some 30 years after leaving Williams College,

I too would wind up in service to the United Church of Christ as the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Conference Foundation, although through a very different path. I was born and raised in Hawai'i, grew up in Central Union Church, and attended Punahou School before going off to Williams. Central Union and Punahou are also institutions that owe their existence in part to the ABCFM. Like many local boys, the pull of coming home was strong, so in 1991, after a brief stint working for a foundation in Washington D.C., I returned home to attend law school at the University of Hawai'i.

As a practicing attorney with Chun Kerr LLP, I was introduced to the Hawai'i Conference through my partner George Kerr. George was a fellow Central Union Church member and served on conference and foundation boards, and had been one of the conference's attorneys. As a law clerk in the summer of 1993, George and I worked on a legal brief on behalf of the conference that was filed in the Supreme Court of the United States—exciting stuff for a young attorney.

After George's passing in 1998, I continued my legal work for the conference. I assumed the role of conference attorney for the Hawai'i Conference, and in that capacity have been working with the conference and the foundation on a variety of legal and organizational matters ever since.

Like my fellow Williams College alumni who dedicated themselves in 1806 to the mission work from which this conference was born, I am honored to have the opportunity to dedicate myself on a full-time basis to stewardship of the Hawai'i Conference Foundation and the advancement of its mission.



Haystack Monument

Photo Credit: Williams College

[My Pilgrimage to God's Beloved Community. continued from page 1](#)

One particular exercise proved highly instructive in flushing out my embedded biases. Early on, we were each given the name of a past resident of Kalaupapa and asked to learn as much as we could in the ensuing days. At the end of our stay, if it was possible and permissible, we would be able to visit the grave of our assigned person. I was given the name of a young woman, who before being sent to Kalaupapa, enjoyed the company of then Princess Lili'uokalani and her sister Princess Miriam Likelike. Lizzie Kapoli Kaumakau's musical abilities and compositions were extolled by her ali'i friends. She was given land by Princess Ruth Ke'elikōlani and a lifelong stipend by Bernice Pauahi Bishop. But such privilege failed to immunize her from ma'i pake, the colloquial name for Hansen's disease. She was sent to Kalaupapa in 1888 and died three years later from complications of the flu and dysentery. Kapoli Kaumakau's brief life at Kalaupapa showed me that in the midst of constant death, struggle and deprivation—music, singing and a “beautiful bouquet of flowers”¹ were needed just as much as bandages and medicine. Sadly, I was not able to find her grave but upon returning to Honolulu found some possible leads.

My fellow pilgrims were also formative during my time at Kalaupapa. I am very grateful that I did not make this journey alone. Through the generosity of Tama, Elle and Linda, I felt the holiness and poignancy of the moment when they placed lei on the graves

¹ Excerpt from Mother Marianne Cope's journal of the gift brought by Lizzie Kapoli Kamakau to welcome the sisters to Kalaupapa in 1888; Law, Anwei Skinsnes, Kalaupapa, A Collective Memory (University of Hawaii Press, 2012).

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Newly installed Pastor Chris Czarnecki and family



Andrew Bunn and Roberta Jahrling



Kaua'i Association Fall Mokupuni



O'ahu E.C.O. 4 Youth campers



Ron Fujiyoshi with Rev. Jimmy and Rostina Moses and daughter, Hilo Marshallese Ministry



David Popham and members of Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa



HCF Board of Trustees



O'ahu Clergy bless David Popham

Youth Gather for "E.C.O." Camp

An idea of the Hawai'i Conference Justice & Witness Missional Team to bring together youth for environmental justice camps came to fruition this fall with "E.C.O. 4 Youth," camps engaging youth in Earth Care Opportunities. Twenty-nine youth gathered on Maui in October and 41 on O'ahu in November to learn how we are affecting our environment and what we can do to protect it. Friendships were formed and strengthened among the 70 youth participants representing four islands and ten churches of the Hawai'i Conference. When we recognize our connection to the earth and to one another, we see that our call to love each other is made possible only when we also love and protect the earth.

Learn more here: www.hcucc.org/eco4youth.



God's Perfect Timing

BY PHYLLIS MEIGHEN, LIHUE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

For many years the Woman's Board of Missions, Kamehameha School-Maui Deputation Team, the Hawai'i Conference and other church-



related groups have contributed to the life of Kalaupapa by sharing the Gospel, worshiping with patient residents, and volunteering their service. As

the number of patients declined in recent years, the Hawai'i Conference Foundation, Kana'ana Hou-Siloama UCC, and the National Park Service showed keen foresight by entering into a long-term agreement in 2003 to protect and preserve the UCC mission and ministry in Kalaupapa. This agreement included a provision to include a spiritual retreat center in the Wilcox Social Hall.

In 2014 ReSource for Christian Spirituality, an ecumenical outreach ministry of St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church in Lihue (directed by UCC Pastor Phyllis Meighen), began to hold spiritual retreats in Kalaupapa. In August 2019, God's perfect timing surfaced a fantastic opportunity when ReSource was approached by the non-profit Coalition for Specialized Housing, a group of architects whose charitable cause is low-income housing for seniors and other specialized groups. The Coalition had learned of the desire for a retreat center in Kalaupapa and invited the submission of a grant request before September 30.

In only one month, the Holy Spirit moved through the Hawai'i Conference, Hawai'i Conference Foundation, and ReSource to collaborate with Kana'ana Hou-Siloama UCC. Kanaka Maoli were included as cultural and spiritual

resources to heighten awareness of cultural and familial values and of Hawaiian protocol. Then after consulting with the National Park Service and the State Department of Health, a request was written and submitted before the deadline. Only God could bring the many voices and interests into such harmony. Two weeks after submission, the Coalition notified ReSource that the request had been approved. Everyone involved is so very grateful for the opportunity to continue the mission and ministry of the UCC in Kalaupapa.

Richard Miller, a historical preservationist as well as pastor of Kana'ana Hou-Siloama, is very well qualified to coordinate construction. Most of the labor will be accomplished by volunteers. The completed retreat center will be simple and basic, in keeping with Kalaupapa. It will have semi-private sleeping quarters for 10 retreatants or volunteer workers, a kitchen, and two bathrooms. The hope is that it will be ready for retreat occupancy to be dedicated next spring as part of the bicentennial year.

Wherever possible the stories of Kalaupapa will be told in the voices of the patients who lived there. The seminal book *Kalaupapa: A Collective Memory* by Anwei Skinsnes Law will serve as a primary resource. The voices are of suffering and courage; of abiding faith and human frailties; of justice and compassion; of love and forgiveness; of all that makes up the human condition. The voices of the patient residents have a powerful message for us today. The lessons are deep and lasting. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide all who go to Kalaupapa in the ways of God's hope for a new world of dignity, justice, and compassion for all God's people.

mission **Offering**

Kalaupapa Sunday

On the fourth Sunday of every January, churches are invited to commemorate the estimated 8,000 people diagnosed with Hansen's Disease who were exiled to Moloka'i's remote Kalaupapa peninsula.

Resources for observing Kalaupapa Sunday are available on the Hawai'i Conference website (www.hcucc.org). A resolution passed at the 195th 'Aha Pae'aina also encourages churches and individuals to make donations toward the construction and maintenance of a memorial listing the names of every person sent to Kalaupapa. Funds may be donated to the nonprofit Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa.

The suggested date for observing Kalaupapa Sunday is January 26, 2020, though churches may honor the patients of Kalaupapa and their families any Sunday in the year.

Henry 'Ōpūkaha'ia Scholarship

Each year on the Sunday closest to the anniversary of Henry 'Ōpūkaha'ia's death, churches are invited to receive an offering to support scholarships in his name.

Henry 'Ōpūkaha'ia Scholarships, which honor the legacy of the young Hawaiian credited with inspiring the Sandwich Islands mission that brought Christianity to Hawai'i, are available to candidates for ministry attending an accredited seminary and clergy pursuing continuing education.

Churches are invited to receive an offering to support these scholarships on Sunday, February 16, 2020. The offering may also be collected on another date.

My Pilgrimage to God's Beloved Community, continued from page 3

of their kupuna. The nearness of Kalaupapa's past mingled ever so gently with the present as hands pulled out encroaching weeds and washed down headstones. Then as a jolting joyous reminder that life in Kalaupapa is also rooted in the now, we met the 95-year old calabash uncle of one of our members.



Retreat Participants at Kalaupapa

Hale and hearty, Uncle John rules the roadways of Kalaupapa in his pickup truck. He checked up on us as we pruned the banana grove of a fellow resident and waved goodbye energetically as our prop plane lifted off the runway.

Kalaupapa reminds me that life has a way of breaking through no matter what the original plans were. It is a place where people created their own community and found their worth through faith and resourcefulness. What started out as a colony for the condemned became God's beloved community.



Kana'ana Hou UCC

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the seventh—the only one with children—was a farmer. The ali'i, rightfully cautious of this latest group of foreigners to arrive among them, gave these newcomers **one year** to prove their worth.

Close to my heart are stories of how eager they were to learn 'ōlelo Hawai'i, and how busy they were teaching and serving the Hawaiians during the early years that they had no time to teach their own children. Some made the heartbreaking decision to send their keiki to be educated in New England. Between 1820 and 1841, 20 children were sent to be educated far from their families and the only homes they had known. In a gesture of understanding, the mission board voted to send teachers to allow the mission keiki to remain in the land of their birth.

Thus was the founding of Punahou School, where I have been a chaplain for 25 years. So it was from Punahou that one of our Hawaiian Studies kumu and I were sent to participate in the historic bicentennial events in Boston. Others were there as well—"Hawai'i in Boston" they called us. Included was an enthusiastic group from Kawaiaha'o Church, who will mark their own 200th anniversary in the spring.

Why should we care about all of this? Do the events of 200 years ago matter in our own lives and ministries? Could the consideration of these events help us understand some of the struggles we bear and the blessings we enjoy today? I have found, as I've shared a message of 'Ōpūkaha'ia with congregations around our conference, that many have forgotten his name—or never heard of him in the first place. But the missionaries? Oh, we know—or think we know—all about them. In fact, much mis-information is accepted as truth, both the kind that

condemns their coming and the kind that blindly glorifies it.

Being a denomination that values education and respects heritage, I invite us to look (again) at the story of 'Ōpūkaha'ia; to be inspired by his faith and to understand that we are his legacy. We are invited to look (again) at what was happening here in our islands before those on the Thaddeus arrived; to look (again) at the faith of Ka'ahumanu and Keopuolani while not ignoring the colonial spirit that colored even the purest of intentions. Let's look (again) at the way the events of 200 years ago contributed to Hawai'i's amazing literacy rate and commitment to education, our uniquely beautiful music, our consideration of the best ways to govern in times of great change, and, yes, the faith that undergirded Lili'uokalani's act of forgiving those who had wronged her, a faith that we announce and honor every time we sing all the verses of the "Queen's Prayer."

Of course, we who dwell on the other side of the illegal overthrow of Lili'uokalani a generation after the arrival of the Thaddeus would be irresponsible to ignore the complicity of those who participated, including several bearing the same names as those first arrivals. So we must bring humility and sensitivity to the observance of this bicentennial. We can celebrate the faith that brought new meaning and purpose to so many, while extending our understanding and love to those among us who cannot.

We, in the churches and schools of Hawai'i who are here because of the events of 200 years ago, do have a gift we can share with each other and with the next generation: it is a gift of 'ike/knowledge of the truth of those events. It is a gift of sharing the mo'olelo of 'Ōpūkaha'ia and Hopu, Binamu, Laiana, Betsy Stockton, and so many more.



Merry Christmas from the staff of the Hawai'i Conference United Church of Christ and the Hawai'i Conference Foundation

Highlights from the Website

Go to www.hcucc.org to learn more about these and many more stories from around the Conference.

Service of Installation

Christopher Czarnecki was installed by the Hawai'i Island Association (HIA) as Pastor of First United Protestant Church of Hilo on November 2.

Church Anniversary

Wahiawa UCC on O'ahu celebrated their 100th anniversary on October 27.

Conference Calendar of Events

DECEMBER 24—25

Christmas Holiday (Office Closed)

JANUARY 1

New Year's Holiday (Office Closed)

JANUARY 17—18

State Council of Hawaiian Congregational Churches Board

JANUARY 20

Martin Luther King, Jr., Day (Office Closed)

FEBRUARY 1

Conference Council and Foundation Trustees

FEBRUARY 7—8

AHEC 'Aha Halawai

FEBRUARY 8

Tri-Isle Spring Mokupuni

FEBRUARY 17

Presidents' Day (Office Closed)

FEBRUARY 22

Church Leaders Event

Save the Dates!

CHURCH LEADERS' EVENT: FEBRUARY 22, 2020, AT NU'UANU CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

This event will focus on the "nuts and bolts of leadership" and will be relevant to most church officers. More details coming soon.

NATIONAL YOUTH EVENT— UNITE! JULY 22 – 25, 2020, AT PURDUE UNIVERSITY IN WEST LAFAYETTE, INDIANA

'AHA PAE'AINA: JUNE 3 – 6, 2020, AT KAWAIAHA'O CHURCH ON O'AHU

This will be a significant gathering as we will also commemorate the Hawaiian Mission—Bicentennial. Neighbor Island attendees, please note that there will be two major events happening on O'ahu at this same time, and hotel rooms will be scarce. Please plan ahead and make your reservations early! More details will be forthcoming.

A Celtic Christmas Blessing from the Office Staff:

The light of the Christmas Star to you,
The warmth of home and heart to you,
The cheer and good will of friends to you,
The hope of a childlike heart to you,
The joy of a thousand angels to you,
The love of the Son of God's peace to you.

Thanks to our friends, *The Friend* is free of charge to anyone who requests it. We offer our sincere mahalo to those who have generously given a monetary gift to help defray publication costs. A gift of \$10 will pay for one person's subscription for one year. Gifts may be sent to the Hawai'i Conference UCC, 1848 Nu'uuanu Avenue, Honolulu, HI, 96817.



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Ka Papa Ho‘olālā

Kawaiaha‘o’s Walls Speak

BY KEIKO D’ENBEAU, KAWAIAHA‘O CHURCH

Kawaiaha‘o Church launched the Speaker Series Program as part of the church’s months-long bicentennial commemoration of the delivery of the gospel by the pioneer company of the missionaries to the Hawaiian islands and the April 1820 establishment of Kawaiaha‘o Church.

The first Speaker Series presentation, “If the Walls Could Speak,” was offered by Keiko D’Enbeau on September 27. The “walls spoke” through Keiko in the first-person voice as the walls told the stories behind seven of the tablets mounted on the walls of the church and of the significant events witnessed within and outside the walls.

The featured tablets were those of the ali‘i, Ka‘ahumanu and

Kauikeaouli; church members John Papa I‘i, Levi and Ululani Haalelea, and Laura Coney; statesman and diplomat Ha‘alilio, and Scottish botanist David Douglas whose namesake is the Douglas fir tree. The life story of Ululani Haalelea was told as an inspiration to church members as Haalelea organized the first fund-raising event, “Aha Fea,” to raise funds to rebuild the interior of the church in 1893—a year that marked a deep division within the church as a result of the overthrow of the monarchy earlier that year.

The walls “spoke” of a poignant and historical moment, lost to history over time, that took place when Queen Lili‘uokalani’s body lay in rest as reported by the *Hawaiian Gazette* on November 16, 1917: *Its absence*

was remarked by many, but at eleven o’clock Colonel Laukea, the Queen’s Chamberlain during her reign and Chamberlain still, accompanied by L. J. Warren, attorney for the Lili‘uokalani Trust, appeared with the diadem. The crowd was halted and the kahili bearers held their emblems stationary while Colonel Laukea, assisted by Mrs. Maili Smithies, a devoted personal friend of the Queen’s, arranged the diadem. The people in the church watched the recrowning of Lili‘uokalani with breathless interest. Not a sound was heard as the crown was placed where it so often lain in days of glorious monarchy rule.

