

## End of the Mission

“The advent of the white man in the Pacific was inevitable, and especially in Hawai‘i, by reason of its size, resources, and, most important, its location at the crossroads of this vastest of oceans, rapidly coming into its own in fulfilment of prophecies that it was destined to become the chief theater of the world's future activities.” (Frear, 1935)

Years before the westward land movement gathered momentum, the energies of seafaring New Englanders found their natural outlet, along their traditional pathway, in the Pacific Ocean.

What helped started in the dawn hours of January 18, 1778, on his third expedition, when British explorer Captain James Cook on the HMS Resolution and Captain Charles Clerke of the HMS Discovery first sighted what Cook named the Sandwich Islands (that were later named the Hawaiian Islands.)

On the afternoon of January 20, 1778, Cook anchored his ships near the mouth of the Waimea River on Kauai’s southwestern shore. After a couple of weeks, there, they headed to the west coast of North America.

In the Islands, as in New France (Canada to Louisiana (1534,)) New Spain (Southwest and Central North America to Mexico and Central America (1521)) and New England (Northeast US,) the trader preceded the missionary.

Practically every vessel that visited the North Pacific in the closing years of the 18th century stopped at Hawai‘i for provisions and recreation.

“During the forty-two years from Cook's discovery to the arrival of the first missionaries, and long afterwards, there came this way thousands of whites beach-combers, Botany Bay convicts, fur-traders, whalers, and others, including black-birders in the South Seas, who, with noteworthy exceptions ...”

“... lived up to the then-prevailing motto that ‘there was no God this side of Cape Horn,’ or, when they rounded the Cape, ‘hung their consciences on the Horn,’ as it was said, and who, bent solely on their own profit and pleasure, brought muskets, alcohol, and infectious and contagious diseases, promoted licentiousness and exploited the natives, without a thought for their rights or welfare.” (Frear, 1935)

“The natives were quick to imitate the white man, whether as to clothes, liquor, tobacco, cards, or other things.” (Frear, 1935)

Hawaiian demand for American goods was rapidly increasing, owing to the improved standards of living. The central location of the Hawaiian Islands brought many traders, and then whalers, to the Islands.

## Coming of the Missionaries

“The Hawaiians had been playing with the rest of the world for forty-years by the time the missionaries came here. The missionaries are not the first to the buffet and most people had messed up the food already.” (Puakea Nogelmeier)



On October 23, 1819, the Pioneer Company of American Protestant missionaries from the northeast US set sail on the Thaddeus for the Sandwich Islands (now known as Hawai'i.) There were seven American couples sent by the ABCFM to convert the Hawaiians to Christianity in this first company.

By the time the Pioneer Company arrived, Kamehameha I had died and the centuries-old kapu system had been abolished; through the actions of King Kamehameha II (Liholiho,) with encouragement by former Queens Ka'ahumanu and Keōpūolani (Liholiho's mother,) the Hawaiian people had already dismantled their heiau and had rejected their religious beliefs.

"And the missionaries, that first bunch on the Thaddeus almost didn't get to land. I am sure many of you know the story that Kamehameha had said, 'yes send missionaries from England,' so when they arrived from America, his son almost said, 'no, we'll wait for the pizza we ordered ... this isn't the group we asked for.'"

"But, they end up staying and the impact is immediate. They are the first outside group that doesn't want to take advantage of you, one way or the other, get ahold of their goods, their food, or your daughter." (Puakea Nogelmeier)

"(F)or forty years Hawaiians wanted everything on every ship that came. And they could get it; it was pretty easy to get. Two pigs and ... a place to live, you could trade for almost anything." (Puakea Nogelmeier)

"(The missionaries) come with a set of skills that Hawaiians are really impressed with. ... The missionaries were the first group of a scholarly background, but they also had the patience and endurance. So that's part of the skill sets. ... That's really the more important things that are attracted first."

"But the second thing is they are pono."

"They have an interaction that is intentionally not taking advantage. It's not crude. They don't get drunk and throw up on the street ... and they don't take advantage and they don't make a profit. So that pono actually is more attractive than religion."

Over the course of a little over 40-years (1820-1863 - the "Missionary Period",) about 184-men and women in twelve Companies served in Hawai'i to carry out the mission of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in the Hawaiian Islands.

Collaboration between native Hawaiians and the American Protestant missionaries resulted in, among other things, the introduction of Christianity; the creation of the Hawaiian written language and widespread literacy; the promulgation of the concept of constitutional government; making Western medicine available; and the evolution of a new and distinctive musical tradition (with harmony and choral singing.)

## The Hawaiian Islands Mission Ended in 1863

“The mission, having accomplished, through the blessing of God, the work specially appropriate to it as a mission, has been, as such, disbanded, and merged in the community.” (Rufus Anderson, Foreign Secretary of the ABCFM, 1863)

Dr Rufus Anderson, Foreign Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions traveled from Boston to Hawai'i to attend the annual meeting of the Hawaiian Evangelical Association (the name attributed to the Hawaiian Mission). The General Meeting was held from June 3, 1863 to July 1, 1863; attendance included the following (as noted by their respective Mission Stations):

### From Hawaii

Rev. Asa Thurston, of Kailua  
Rev. John D. Paris, from South Kona  
Rev. Lorenzo Lyons, of Waimea  
Rev. Elias Bond, from Kohala  
Rev. O. H. Gulick, from Kau  
Rev. Titus Coan, Rev. David B. Lyman, and Charles H. Wetmore, MD., from Hilo

### From Maui

Rev. Dwight Baldwin, from Lahaina  
Rev. John F. Pogue, from Lahainaluna  
Rev. William P. Alexander, from Wailuku  
Rev. Sereno E. Bishop, from Hana

### From Molokai

Rev. Anderson O. Forbes, from Kalauaha

### From Oahu

Rev. Ephraim W. Clark, Rev. Lowell Smith, Rev. Peter J. Gulick, Rev. Artemas Bishop, Rev. Lorrin Andrews, Rev. Henry H. Parker, and Messrs. Gerrit P. Judd, M. D., Henry Dimond, Edwin O. Hall, Samuel N. Castle, and Amos S. Cooke, from Honolulu  
Rev. Cyrus T. Mills (President of Oahu College), and Prof. William De Witt Alexander, from Punahou  
Rev. Benjamin W. Parker, from Kaneohe  
Rev. John S. Emerson, from Waialua.

### From Kauai

Rev. George B. Rowell, from Waimea;  
Rev. James W. Smith, M. D., and Rev. Daniel Dole, from Koloa;  
Rev. Edward Johnson and Mr. Abner Wilcox, from Waioli.

Rev. E. Corwin (Pastor of the Foreign Church), Rev. S. C. Damon (Pastor of the Bethel Church)

**The wives of most of the above-named persons were present, also:** Mrs. Mercy Whitney, Mrs. Clarissa Armstrong, Mrs. Maria Chamberlain, Mrs. Rebecca Hitchcock, Mrs. Mary S. Rice, and Mrs. Jane Shipman, widows of deceased missionaries; and Miss Maria Ogden and Miss Lydia Brown.

**Corresponding Members.** -Rev. Rufus Anderson, D. D., Foreign Secretary of the A. B. C. F. M., from Boston, U. S.; Rev. Edward T. Doane, from Ebon, Micronesia Mission; and Rev. J. Bicknell, formerly connected with the Marquesas Mission.

Subsequent meeting minutes and other references noted that, “Dr. Anderson having recently returned from a visit to the Sandwich Islands, which he made at the special request of the Prudential Committee ... for the purpose of ascertaining, by personal intercourse with the missionaries, the members of their churches, and the people generally to whom they had ministered, more fully than could be done in any other way, ...”

“... the real condition of the people, the state of the churches, and the character of their members, and witnessing on the ground the results effected among the people of the Islands by the power and Spirit of God, through the labors of the missionaries; ...”



“... for the further purpose of freely conferring and advising with the missionaries, and with members of the Hawaiian churches, upon the present condition and further prospects of the missionary work there ...”

“... and devising such plans of future action, as should bring the native churches, as speedily as possible, in what is believed to be the natural order in such cases, (1) to a condition of self-government, and (2) by means of the greater activity and earnestness which would be developed by this self-government, to a condition of complete self-support ...”

“... and, also, for the purpose of determining, by such free conference with the missionaries, what may best be their future relations to the Board and its work”. (Action of the Prudential Committee; Proceedings of the Hawaiian Evangelical Association)

“The state of things at the Islands is peculiar. They have been Christianized. The missionaries have become citizens. In a technical sense they no longer are missionaries, but pastors, and as such on an official parity with the native pastors.” (Anderson)

“The Protestant Christian community, as in older Christian countries, has been organized for action. And the American Board, at its annual meeting next following, which was at Rochester, NY, performed the crowning act, by transferring to this new Hawaiian Board its own responsibilities for directing the work on the Hawaiian Islands.”

“As has been intimated, it relieves the native churches of the support of the older missionaries, in order that those churches may be able to support their own native ministry and their different charities. It also holds out an encouraging hand to the infant churches, by engaging to make grants-in-aid, for a time, to the new Board.”

“What we are permitted to see, therefore, is a glorious triumph of the gospel through the labors of missionaries; and, it is believed, an effectual planting of gospel institutions on those Islands, for whatever people shall occupy them in the coming ages. There is now there an organized Christian government, with a constitution and laws as accordant with the Holy Scriptures as in the best old Christian nations.”

“Nearly one third of the population are members of Protestant churches; the native education is provided for by the government; houses for the worship of God have been everywhere erected, and are preserved by the people; regular Christian congregations assemble on the Sabbath ...”

“... and there is all the requisite machinery for the healthful development of the inner life of the nation, and for securing it a place, however humble, among the religious benefactors of the world.”

“In short, we see a Protestant Christian nation in the year 1863 ... self-governing in all its departments, and nearly self-supporting. And the Hawaiian nation is on the whole well governed. The laws are good, and appear to be rigidly enforced. The king at the time of this meeting was in declining health, and did not long after.”

“Better educated by far than any of his predecessors, more intelligent, more capable of ruling well, he was subject to strong feeling, and was said to be less an object of veneration and love to his people than was his immediate predecessor.” (Anderson)

“The Hawaiian Evangelical Association, which has heretofore consisted only of missionaries and other evangelical ministers of foreign birth who sympathize with them, is henceforth to consist of all clergymen, both native and foreign, of the Congregational and Presbyterian orders, on the Hawaiian, Micronesia, and Marquesas Islands; and also of lay delegates, appointed annually by the local ecclesiastical bodies, and of laymen elected by a two-thirds vote of the Association.” (Anderson)

The Prudential Committee of the ABCFM “Resolved, That ... the Protestant Christian community of the Islands has attained to the position of complete self-support, as to its religious institutions, there is yet ample occasion for gratitude to God for his signal blessing upon this mission”.

It further “Resolved, That the proposition made by the Protestant Christian community at the Sandwich Islands, who have organized a working Board, called ‘The Board of the Hawaiian Evangelical Association,’ to relieve the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and the American churches, from the responsibility of future oversight and direction in the work ...”

“...And this Committee joyfully commits to the Board of the Hawaiian Evangelical Association the future care and direction of this evangelizing work in those Islands; and hereby concedes to that Board the right of applying for grants-in-aid, as specified in said proposition.” (Action of the ABCFM Prudential Committee)

Anderson wrote to inform Kamehameha IV of the Hawaiian Evangelical actions and dissolution of the mission in his July 6, 1863 letter noting, in part: “I may perhaps be permitted, in view of my peculiar relations to a very large body of the best friends and benefactors of this nation, not to leave without my most respectful aloha to both your Majesties.”



“The important steps lately taken in this direction are perhaps sufficiently indicated in the printed Address .... I am happy to inform your Majesty that the plan there indicated has since been adopted, and is now going into effect, — with the best influence, as I cannot doubt, upon the religious welfare of your people.”

“My visit to these Islands has impressed me, not only with the strength, but also with the beneficent and paternal character of your government. In no nation in Christendom is there greater security of person and property, or more of civil and religious liberty.”

“As to the progress of the nation in Christian civilization, I am persuaded, and shall confidently affirm on my return home, that the history of the Christian church and of nations affords nothing equal to it.”

“And now the Hawaiian Christian community is so far formed and matured, that the American Board ceases to act any longer as principal, and becomes an auxiliary,— merely affording grants in aid of the several departments of labor in building up the kingdom of Christ in these Islands, and also in the Islands of Micronesia.”

“Praying God to grant long life and prosperity to your Majesties, I am, with profound respect, Your Majesty's obedient, humble servant, R. Anderson”

Later (October 1863), the ABCFM “Resolved, That, in taking this additional step toward the conclusion of our work in the Sandwich Islands, we record anew our grateful and adoring sense of the marvelous success, which our missionaries there have been enabled to achieve by the blessing of God, to whom be all the glory.”

“Resolved, That while we rejoice, with all our surviving missionaries, ill the results of which we and the world are witnesses, we offer our special congratulations to the two venerable fathers of the mission, the Rev. Hiram Bingham, and the Rev. Asa Thurston ...”

“... who, having been consecrated and commended to the grace of God for that work by our predecessors, forty-four years ago, are still among the living, to praise God with us and with all the saints, for this great victory of the gospel, and to say, ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servants depart in peace, according to thy word, for our eyes have seen thy salvation.’” (Action of the Board; Proceedings of the Hawaiian Evangelical Association)