

## A Parting Address

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), based in Boston, was founded in 1810, the first organized missionary society in the US ... “and was incorporated, by the Legislature of Massachusetts, June 20, 1812. Its beginnings, as is well known, were small, and the anticipations of its supporters not remarkably sanguine:”

“but its resources and operations have regularly increased, till, in respect to the number of its patron - the amount of its funds - and the extent of its influence, it is entitled to a place among the principal benevolent institutions of the earth.”

“The American Board of Foreign Missions, however, can neither claim, nor does it desire exclusive patronage. There are other Foreign Missionary Societies, for whom there is room, for whom there is work enough, and for whose separate existence there are, doubtless, conclusive reasons.”

“Christian charity is not a blind impulse but, is characterized in Scripture, as ‘the wisdom from above’, such wis - as is in heaven, - which is ‘pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.’”

“The system of operation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions may be considered under two divisions, - its Home Department, and its Foreign Missions. ... The Board has established missions, in the order of time in which they are now named at Bombay, and Ceylon; among the Cherokees, Choctaws, and the Cherokees of the Arkansas (and later) Asia.”

Then, they decided to send a Company of missionaries to the Hawaiian Islands. The Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in giving instructions to the pioneers of 1819 said:

“Your mission is a mission of mercy, and your work is to be wholly a labor of love. ... Your views are not to be limited to a low, narrow scale, but you are to open your hearts wide, and set your marks high. You are to aim at nothing short of covering these islands with fruitful fields, and pleasant dwellings and schools and churches, and of Christian civilization.” (The Friend)

“When the time came for establishing the mission (to Hawai’i), three Hawaiian youths in the Foreign Mission School at Cornwall, named Thomas Hopu, William Tenui (Kanui), and John Honuri (Honoli’i), were described, in a Report of the Board, as instructed in the doctrines and duties of Christianity, and made partakers, as was charitably hoped, of spiritual and everlasting blessings. These youths became connected with the mission as native helpers.”

“Messrs. Hiram Bingham and Asa Thurston, from the Andover Theological Seminary, were ordained as missionaries at Goshen, Conn., on the 29th of September, 1819. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Heman Humphrey, afterwards President of Amherst College, from Joshua xiii. 1: ‘There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.’”

“Besides these, the mission contained a physician. Dr. Holman; two schoolmasters, Messrs. Whitney and Ruggles; a printer, Mr. Loomis; and a farmer, Mr. Chamberlain. All these were married men, and the farmer took with him his five children.” (Anderson, 1872)

“Within two weeks after the ordination in Goshen, the missionary company assembled in Boston, to receive their instructions and embark. There, in the vestry of Park Street Church, under the counsels of the officers of the Board, Dr. S Worcester, Dr. J Morse, J Evarts, Esq., and others, the little pioneer band was, on the 15th of Oct., 1819, organized into a Church for transplantation.” (Hiram Bingham)

“The members of the mission, at the time of receiving their public instructions from the Board in Park-Street Church, were organized into a mission church, including the three islanders. There existed then no doubt as to the expediency of such a step.” (Anderson, 1872)

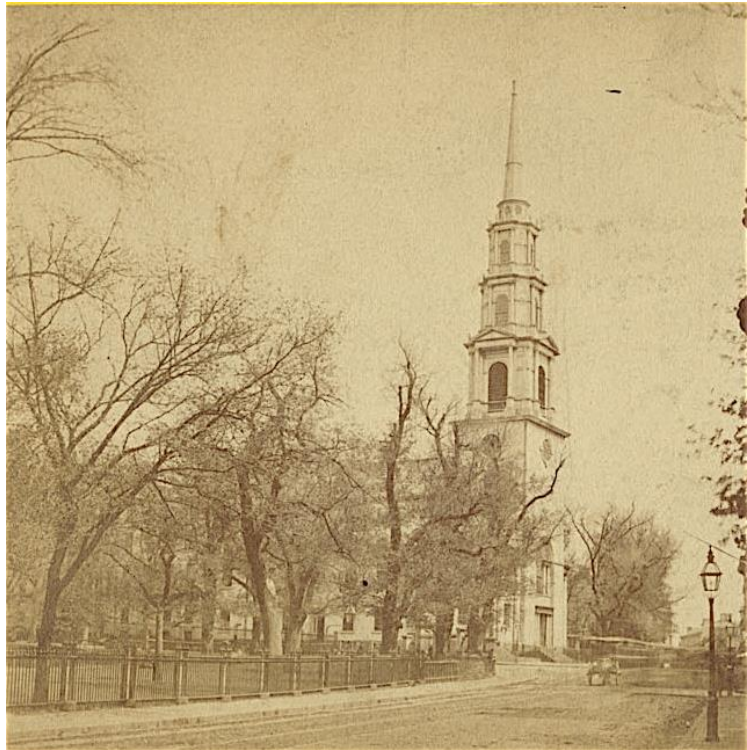
“The members renewed their covenant, and publicly subscribed with their hands unto the Lord, and united in a joyful song.”

“O happy day that fixed my choice  
On thee my Savior and my God!  
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,  
And tell its raptures all abroad.

'Tis done-the great transaction's done,  
I am my Lord's, and he is mine;  
He drew me, and I followed on,  
Charmed to confess the voice divine.

High Heaven that heard the solemn vow,  
That vow renewed shall daily hear;  
Till in life's latest hour I bow, '  
And bless in death a bond so dear.”

“In these solemn and memorable transactions, the parties cherished the delightful expectation, that the prayer then offered by one of the Missionaries, ‘that this vine might be transplanted and strike its roots deep in the Sandwich Islands, and send forth its branches and its fruits till it should fill the land,’ would not only be heard in Heaven, but ere long, be graciously answered to the joy of the Hawaiian people, and of their friends throughout Christendom.”



*Park Street Church, 19<sup>th</sup> Century*

“The object for which the missionaries felt themselves impelled to visit the Hawaiian race, was to honor God, by making known his will, and to benefit those heathen tribes, by making them acquainted with the way of life ...” (The term ‘heathen’ (without the knowledge of Jesus Christ and God) was a term in use at the time (200-years ago.))

“... to turn them from their follies and crimes, idolatries and oppressions, to the service and enjoyment of the living God, and adorable Redeemer, - to give them the Bible in their own tongue, with ability to read it for themselves ...”

“... to introduce and extend among them the more useful arts and usages of civilized and Christianized society, and to fill the habitable parts of those important islands with schools and churches, fruitful fields, and pleasant dwellings.”

“To do this, not only were the Spirit and power of the Highest required, - for, ‘Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it,’ but, since he will not build his spiritual house, unless his laborers build it ...”

“... the preacher and translator, the physician, the farmer, the printer, the catechist, and schoolmaster, the Christian wife and mother, the female teacher of heathen wives, mothers, and children, were also indispensable.”

“Nor could this work be reasonably expected to be done by a few laborers only, at few and distant points, and in the face of all the opposition which Satan and Wicked men would, if possible, naturally array against them.”

“In conformity with the judgment of the Prudential Committee, the pioneer missionary company consisted of two ordained preachers and translators, a physician, two schoolmasters and catechists, a printer and a farmer, the wives of the seven, and three Hawaiians.” (Hiram Bingham)

“The members of our mission, brought together from different parts of our land, feeling bound by the will of God to enter on the missionary work, subscribed to vows (it may be well to observe), similar in their nature and extent, to the public vows of all who properly join themselves to the Lord and his people.”

“The specification of a design to convey the Gospel to a particular tribe, marked a difference from ordinary Church covenants, less than might at first glance be supposed; for all true churches engage, by covenant, to do the Lord's bidding.”

“The true convert is bound to observe the ordinances and to extend the influence of the Gospel, because Christ requires it, rather than because of his own engagement.”

“To know, to be qualified, to have opportunity, constitute the special call to do good. And for aught that appears to the contrary, the Divine injunction to teach men universally to observe all the commands of the Redeemer, is a call to teach, extended by him to every son of Zion whom he qualifies thus to serve him.”

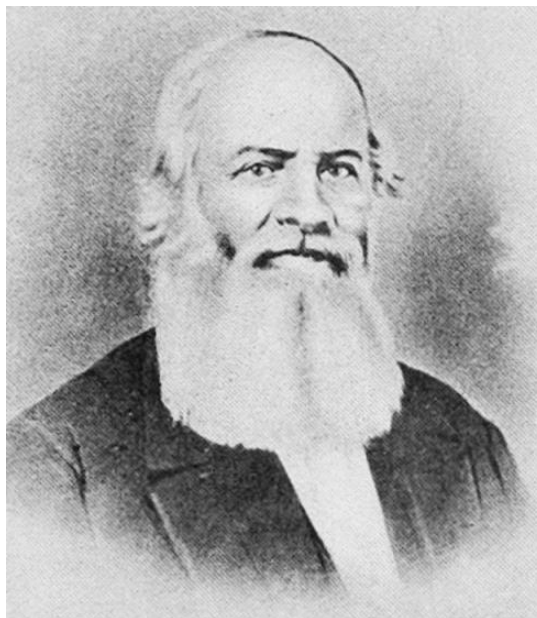
“The mission received the public instructions of the Prudential Committee given by Dr. Worcester, on the evening of the 15<sup>th</sup> of Oct., at Park St. Church, when one of these pioneers preached " on the grand design of the Bible to promote benevolent action.”

“Many churches, in different parts of the country, moved by the same spirit, engaged in special, earnest prayer for the success of this mission, and many a heart began to anticipate the happy result of the enterprise.” (Bingham)

“The next morning, Saturday, October 16, at 10 o'clock, Mr. Thurston delivered a farewell address in the same church to a large congregation of friends of missions from various parts of New England. A portion of his words were as follows:

## A Parting Address (Excerpt)

Permit me, my dear friends, to express the sentiments and feelings of this missionary company on the present occasion. We would express our gratitude to the Great Head of the Church, for the provision He has made for the souls of men, and for the evidence which He graciously gives us, that we are severally interested in this great salvation. We bless God that we live in this interesting period of the world-that so much has been done, and that so much is still doing to extend the blessings of the Redeemer's kingdom to the ends of the earth.



The present is emphatically styled a day of action. The Church is opening her eyes on the miseries of a world lying in wickedness. Her compassion is moved, and her benevolence excited to alleviate human sufferings, and to save the soul from death. We have felt that the Savior was speaking to us, and our bosoms have panted for the privilege of engaging in the blessed work of evangelizing the heathen.

We have voluntarily devoted ourselves to this great object, and have been set apart to go forth and labor for its accomplishment. In a few days we expect to leave this loved land of our nativity, for the far distant isles of the sea, there to plant this little vine, and nourish it, till it shall extend through all the islands, till it shall shoot its branches across to the American coast, and its precious fruit shall be gathered at the foot of her mountains.”  
(Asa Thurston, as noted by Lucy Thurston)

## Missionary Period

Over the course of a little over 40-years (1820-1863 - the “Missionary Period”), about 180-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 American Protestant missionaries resulted in, among other things, the

- Introduction of Christianity;
- Development of a written Hawaiian language and establishment of schools that resulted in widespread literacy;
- Promulgation of the concept of constitutional government;
- Combination of Hawaiian with Western medicine; and
- Evolution of a new and distinctive musical tradition (with harmony and choral singing)