

PRESS RELEASE – 7/18/21

Hawai'i's last ruler was *Queen Lili'uokalani*. A prolific composer, our beloved queen created some of the most popular Hawaiian tunes and compositions of all time as she guided her Hawaiian people through crisis. In 1893, the Hawaiian monarchy was overthrown by a group led by U.S. Government Minister John L. Stevens, and as a result, *Queen Lili'uokalani* was put under house arrest at the *'Iolani Palace*. During her imprisonment, she composed many pieces of music mourning the treatment of her homeland and people. Best known for her love songs, like "*Aloha 'Oe*", her less popular tunes were quite political. One such song was "*Mai Wakinekona a Iolani Hale*". The queen anonymously wrote this song's lyrics and published them in a weekly Hawaiian language newspaper, subversively messaging how she came to be imprisoned. The following week, someone published a response in song lyrics, "*We have heard you, oh heavenly one, our ruler, and we support you.*" Queen Lili'uokalani followed with: "*My love for you will never be broken. I will always be grateful for your support.*" This anonymous correspondence went on for three months and was eventually set to music in 1895. This heartfelt connection is called, "*kūkulu kumuhana*". *Kūkulu* means "to build". *Kumu* referred to a "source" and *hana* incorporated an activity or work. It was the joining together of a "unified force" to share, express and respond to someone's need or address a specific circumstance. When we say, "we are with you", "we support you", "we are pulling for you" or "we will always be thinking of you", these phrases describe the essence of *kūkulu kumuhana*. However, to express its true value and be whole, these phrases must include *pule* (prayer). Expressions such as, "we are praying for you" is the ultimate representation of *kūkulu kumuhana* because it always involves the supportive action of each person to incorporate the divine nature of God in providing the *kokua* (help) we need.

Upon reconsideration and the decisive approval of our amended resolution, the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches humbly and gratefully thank the support of our brothers and sisters of the United Church of Christ. Through the significant bond of *kūkulu kumuhana* and the power of authentic biblical fellowship, God has spoken. With this said, I would like to commend the prayerful and diligent efforts of our Resolution Committee comprised of chairperson, Kalaniakea Wilson, Gloria Pualani Muraki and pastors, Kahu Ron Fujiyoshi and Kahu Kaleo Patterson. As we look ahead, I ask that you once again, join us in prayer as God orchestrates and guides our association to renewal, restoration, rebuilding, revival, and reclamation. It will also be a time of rediscovery. To heal, unite, forgive, repent, and reconcile. Like the tradition of a Hawaiian lei, it is the bringing together of God's people (*nā pua a ke Akua* – God's "flowers") in unification through the cordage of the Holy Spirit. These are the strands of God's grace and "aloha" (love). Scripture says, "Whoever lives in love, lives in God and God in them." (1Jn.4:15) Love is the key to a solid spiritual foundation.

Through your stance with us, the journey of the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches (AHEC) begins, and the power of “aloha” is the “*wa’a*” (canoe) that will carry us through. In times of conflict and disagreement, it is our unity in the body of Christ that will help us stay focused on God. As His Church, each of us has a seat for the journey and as we take up our paddle, the “*mana*” (power) of God unites us joyfully and kindly together. I pray that you will find your place with us as we remain in God and reflect Him in all that we do. Our commitment is to each other and regardless of our differences, we are called to accept one another just as God in Christ has accepted us. As for what to do about the future, we continue to trust the sovereignty of Almighty God. **Even in times of struggle, we will trust in Him as we seek justice and peace.** Love has the power to bring us together as we abide in Him and in His word. Will you join us?

Respectfully submitted,

Papa Makua Wendell Davis, Association Minister, Chief Executive and Administrative Officer