A PRONOUNCEMENT ON A UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST MINISTRY TO
RESTORE SELF-GOVERNANCE TO THE FIRST CHRISTIAN NATION IN THE
PACIFIC, THE HAWAIIAN KINGDOM

I. SUMMARY

It has been thirty years since the passing of the Resolution: Self-Governance of Native Hawaiians that “in recognition of our denomination’s historical complicities in the illegal overthrow of the constitutional monarchy of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893 directs the Office of the President of the UCC to offer a public apology to the native Hawaiian people and to initiate a process of reconciliation between the United Church of Christ and native Hawaiians.

What has happened over the last thirty (30) years?

It has been 201 years since the first ABCFM missionaries took the Gospel to Hawaii. What has happened over the last 201 years?

It has been 158 years since Rev. Rufus Anderson, Secretary of the ABCFM went to Hawai‘i to tell the missionaries to turn the church over to the Native pastors.

What has happened over the last 158 years?

We have since seen the COVID-19 pandemic and the deaths of Black people like George Floyd. As the “God is Still Speaking” Church, what does the United Church of Christ hear God saying to us?

If not “Radical Reconciliation,” then what?

Fundamentally nothing has changed in the condition of the Hawaiian people after one hundred twenty-eight (128) years of the illegal occupation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Instead of being stewards of nature, nature has been treated as a separate entity to dominate and as a commodity to exploit for profit. Indigenous peoples who lived in harmony with nature have much to teach about the original harmony.

Accordingly, this pronouncement calls upon the United Church of Christ to support all initiatives towards self-governance for Hawaiians.

This Pronouncement also calls upon our UCC local churches and regional and national bodies to commit themselves to work towards full and just compensation for Hawaiian peoples under international law.

The ways of the west are (not) the ways of Christ
II. BACKGROUND

A. HAWAIIAN KINGDOM

No other indigenous language in the world is connected to the geographical features of this archipelago like Hawaiian. The Hawaiian language is for the Hawaiian people, Hawaiian nation, Hawaiian land and the Hawaiian government. The Hawaiian language developed into a complex intellectual identity that continues to be accessed through Hawaiian language newspapers. Indigenous language carries the rare qualities of the shared experiences in Hawaiian society for centuries. Aloha is another example of the relations between word meanings, usage and context. Aloha means hello, greetings, love and much more. If you separate the word by sound into two parts alo and ha they separately can invoke other meanings. Alo is face, alo a he alo is face to face. Ha is the breath of life. The word Aloha not only means love, compassion and hello but aloha is also the indigenous custom of greeting with honi.

The Hawaiian language is the core of the Hawaiian national identity. The 1840 Hawaiian Kingdom Constitution created the first Christian democratic government in the pacific recognized by the family of nations. On October 8, 1840 Kamehameha III endorsed the Declaration of Rights and the first Christian constitution for the Hawaiian Kingdom government in the pacific.

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1 “Ka Nupepa Kuokoa,” Nupepa Kuokoa, November 19, 1864. “O Hawai‘i no ka poe Hawai‘i! Lahui Hawai‘i! Aina Hawai‘i! Aupuni Hawai‘i! OLELO HAWAII! Ua kiola anei na Aupuni e o ka honua i ko lakou mau olelo, a apo ma ka olelo o kekahiaina e? Aole anei i paa o Geremania i kana olelo? Aole ane i hoopaa o Faranii kana? Aole ane i hoopaa o Sepania i kana? No ko lakou ike i ka maikai o ka olelo Enelani, ua hoowahawaha anei lakou i ko lakou mau olelo pono, a ao ma ko ka Enelani wale no? Aole loa”


5 Mary Kawena Pukui, Hawaiian Dictionary (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 44.

6 David Keau Sai, Ua Mau Ke Ea Sovereignty Endures (Honolulu: Pua Foundation, 2013), 47.
B. Denationalization of the Christian Hawaiian Kingdom

“Kaumaha na lani kaumaha pu me ka lahui.”

The sadness of the skies is one with the sadness of the nation.

“He mea oiaio, aohe wa kaumaha i ike ia mai kinohi mai e like me keia la, iwaena o ka lahui”

The truth is no sadder time has ever been known from the beginning of time until today of the nation.

*Ke Aloha Aina*, 13 Aukake 1898, 3.

On August 12, 1898 G.N. Pratt from the USS Philadelphia, hoisted the American Flag to the top of a pole in front of Iolani Palace, as part of a ceremony marking the illegal annexation of the Hawaiian Islands to the United States. On this day, the Hawaiian people in attendance weeping and Hawaiian language newspapers mourning, the crowds expressed their sorrow. Witnessing this symbolic exchange from the Hawaiian national flag to the American national flag, in essence, resembled ending the life of the Hawaiian nation for an American one.

Perhaps even more damaging than the hoisting of the new flag Hawaiians were indoctrinated to replace their Hawaiian national ontology for an American national ontology. After the illegal overthrow in 1893, America began Americanization implementation programs in the Hawaiian Kingdom government and into educational institutions in order to secure a military outpost in the middle of the Pacific. Replacing the Hawaiian language with the English language was an intentional cultural bomb that decimated Hawaiian language and culture for future generations. The linguistic goal of Americanization is producing a monolingual English speaking society.

Eileen Tamura explains how the American patriotic program in Hawaii utilized slogans like “one nation, one flag, one language” daily to inculcate children in Hawaii schools to be American. The Americanizing school curriculum was forced upon all school children in the territory of the Hawaiian Kingdom. The desire to Americanize foreign citizens

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in the Hawaiian Kingdom by U.S. officials predates the illegal overthrow of Queen Liliuokalani on January 17, 1893. U.S. ambassador John Stevens stationed in the Hawaiian Kingdom sent a confidential dispatch to the U.S. Secretary of State John Foster on November 20, 1892. It stated the following:

“We must Americanize the islands, assume control of the Crown lands, dispose of them in small lots for actual settlers and freeholders for the raising of coffee, oranges, lemons, bananas, pineapples, and grapes, and the result soon will be to give permanent preponderance to a population and a civilization which will make the islands like southern California, and at no distant period convert them into gardens and sanitariums, as well as supply stations for American commerce, thus bringing everything here into harmony with American life and prosperity. To postpone American action many years is only to add to present unfavorable tendencies and to make future possession more difficult.”

“The Americanization movement in Hawaii mushroomed at the end of World War I and continued unabated through the early 1920s”. After World War II, for example, Germany was indicted for the war crime of Germanization.


### III. BIBLICAL

“Oh, honest Americans, as Christians hear me for my downtrodden people! Their form of government is as dear to them as yours is as precious to you. Quite warmly as you love your country, so they love theirs. With all your goodly possessions, covering a territory so immense

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that there yet remain parts unexplored, possessing islands that, although new at hand, had to be neutral ground in time of war, do not covet the little vineyard of Naboth’s, so far from your shores, lest the punishment of Ahab fall upon you, if not in your day, in that of your children, for be not deceived, God is not mocked. The people to whom your fathers told of the living God, and taught to call “Father,” and now whom the sons now seek to despoil and destroy, are crying aloud to Him in their time of trouble; and He will keep His promise, and will listen to the voices of His Hawaiian children lamenting for their homes.”

Queen Liliuokalani

Theological Perspectives

Scripture Text Related to Proposal Themes

Justice:

Micah 6:8
He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Philippians 4:8
Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

REDRESS:

I Samuel 12:3:4
Here I am; testify against me before the Lord and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Or whose donkey have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? Testify against me and I will restore it to you.” They said, “You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from the hand of anyone.

Luke 19:5-10
Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.” So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.” Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay

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19 Queen Liliuokalani, *Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1898), 1-380.
back four times as much.” Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.

LOVE:

Matthew 22:37
He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

Mark 12:30
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.

Luke 10:27
He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.

I Corinthians 13
If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

RECONCILIATION:

Job 42:8-10
Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly; for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has done.” So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did what the Lord had told them; and the Lord accepted Job’s prayer.

Job’s Fortunes Are Restored Twofold

And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends; and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Matthew 5:24
leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.

I Peter 3:8-9
Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing.

II Corinthians 5:18-20
All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

Biblically, there is a relationship between “Justice” and “Reconciliation” that began with the understanding that there can be no reconciliation without justice. The Hebrew scriptures speak unequivocally for “Justice.”

1. “Yahweh works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed.” (Psalm 103:6)

2. Jesus saw his mission as one of “Justice:”

“The Spirit of god is upon me, because God has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, and has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to those who are blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Sovereign. (Luke 4:18-19)
3. Jesus also preached for an active “Reconciliation” that begins with Justice.

So, if you are offering your gift to the altar, and they remember that your neighbor has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your neighbor, and then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24)

Justice is necessary for reconciling all peoples and creations to God. The prophets’ call for “Justice” was issued in order to reconcile the original harmony of creation with God. God created all people as equal and sovereign with their unique cultures. The creation included the harmony of God with creation, of humans with nature.

Sin is the breaking of this harmony.

RADICAL RECONCILIATION

James 2:14-17

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by actions, I’m dead.”

Revelation 3:15-18

I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other. So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, “I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing. But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

Ending the “Biblical section,” the first quote was from Queen Liliuokalani who astutely quoted from Naboth’s Vineyard found in 1 Kings, chapter 21 in the Bible likening the United States’ attempt to take over Hawai‘i like King Ahab’s attempt to take away Naboth’s vineyard.

To reveal some of the attitude of those representing the Hawaiian Evangelical Association (HEA), the following quote is from The Friend, the official newsletter of the HEA published...
immediately after the overthrow of January 17, 1893. On the front page of The Friend, published in February, 1893 is the lead article written by S. E. Bishop, the Editor.

A WONDERFUL WEEK

“It was that of January, from the 11th to the 19th; a period of strange, startling, impressive experiences. No like period, so important, so exciting, so charged with momentous events have existed since foreigners resided in Honolulu. It was a history-making epoch, witnessing the unheralded and shameful collapse of the once noble and proud Hawaiian monarchy, and initiating, as we believe, a glorious new era of freedom and honor for Hawaii.

Then, least looked for, and most dramatic of the series, came the tragic, scenic self-murder of the monarchy; when, encouraged by kahunas, the half-maddened Queen broke her oath, and discarded the Constitution, to the horror of her white partisans, and to the exulting hope of the people she was betraying, who now saw clear the way to case off the incubus of her caprice and arrogance which they had so wearily and patiently endured. At once sprang forth the wrath and power of the conservative and long-suffering whites. The wise, determined, upright leaders, and the honest, courageous, intelligent rank and file of the thousands of Honolulu’s citizens rallied at once to establish their liberties and to overthrow the rotten Monarchy.”

IV. STATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN CONVICTION

The Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ recognizes the following:

The United Church of Christ has historically stressed the importance of Justice as a key faith component for the Church.

The correction of injustices depends upon correct history based upon factual matters.

History is often based upon who writes the history and factual information available.

At the time of the passing of the Resolution: Self-Governance of Native Hawaiians at the Eighteenth General Synod in 1991, all available information was not available. For example, even within the resolution itself are the words: “Then the Great Mahele (land distribution), a foreign idea of private land ownership, was introduced. The Kingdom of Hawaii enacted this system by Euro-American design and pressure.” Since then, young Hawaiian scholars have proven this to be false—that a young Kamehameha III with elite advisors enacted the Mahele of 1848 in order to keep the land in the hands of the Hawaiian people. Also, in the same resolution,
reference was made to President Richard Nixon in 1970 announcing a national policy of self-
determination on Indian tribes as if this was a model of self-governance for Native Hawaiians.
Everyone knows today that this is NOT the model of self-governance that is to be followed.

Since the time of the Eighteenth General Synod in 1991, the Association of Hawaiian
Evangelical Churches has learned the history of Rev. Rufus Anderson, the long-term secretary
(35 years) of the ABCFM (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission) visit to the
missionaries in Hawaii in 1863. Rev. Rufus Anderson, considered as the author of the three-self
method (self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating) traveled to Hawaii to tell the
missionaries to create self-reliant, self-governing churches and “to devolve upon it (the Hawaiian
churches) the responsibilities of self-government in ecclesiastical matters.” This new knowledge
of past history has stimulated the AHEC to strive for true self-governance.

The information included in this pronouncement on “A Hawaiian Kingdom” and
“Denationalization of the Christian Hawaiian Kingdom” is a beginning attempt to correct some
of the false history that has been disseminated.

Although the United Church of Christ is known for its pro-active stands on Justice, justice
depends upon action, not just stating what is true and just and right (pono in “Hawaiian).

This is a special moment in the history of the United Church of Christ. The people within the
church have all experienced the COVID-19 pandemic. The people have all witnessed the killing
of George Floyd. What is God calling the United Church of Christ to do, to act? The United
Church of Christ needs to learn from people everywhere—from South Africa, from the
indigenous struggles around the world, from past history, from the events unfolding before our
eyes. Could God be calling the United Church of Christ to commit itself to “Radical
Reconciliation” at every level of the Church? The meaning of “radical” as emphasized by our
mentors in the webinar “Radical Reconciliation” (and in the book by the same name) means
“root.” Jesus was radical because he dealt with ROOT issues. Jesus is the model for the United
Church of Christ for “radical reconciliation.”

Therefore, the Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ commits itself to:

- Listen to what God is calling the church to do in 2021.
- Take the initiative to learn the correct history to correct the false narratives that exist.
- To study this document—A Pronouncement on a United Church of Christ Ministry to
  Restore Self-Governance to the First Christian Nation in the Pacific, the Hawaiian
  Kingdom and ask for workshops to clarify remaining questions among your people.
- Join in actions initiated by the national United Church of Christ, its officers, agencies and
  organizations identified as part of the church that address this pronouncement.
- Promote exposure trips of members to visit Hawaii to learn first-hand of the history and
  present realities that exist.
- Repent of the role of the predecessor church and agencies of the United Church of Christ
  that were complicit in not allowing full self-governance to the Native Hawaiian people.
- Repent of discriminatory attitudes held about Native Hawaiians and other indigenous
  peoples.
A PROPOSAL FOR ACTION ON A UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST MINISTRY TO
RESTORE SELF-GOVERNANCE TO THE FIRST CHRISTIAN NATION IN THE
PACIFIC, THE HAWAIIAN KINGDOM

I. SUMMARY

This Proposal for Action requests the United Church of Christ to support and assist the Hawaiian people to restore justice/righteousness (pono) through Hawaiian natural law to the land and people of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Hawaiian land and its people are currently enduring 128 years of continuing desecration, war crimes, pillaging, trade mark infringement, unfair trials, incarceration and illegal occupation by the United States of America.

II. BACKGROUND STATEMENT

This Proposal for Action is based upon the Pronouncement of a United Church of Christ Ministry to Restore Self-Governance to the First Christian Nation in the Pacific, the Hawaiian Kingdom. The Pronouncement presents a policy statement for the United Church of Christ to support, assist and work towards justice/righteousness (pono) for Hawaiian self-governance.

III. IMPLEMENTATION: DIRECTIONAL STATEMENTS AND GOALS

The Thirty-Third General Synod gives the responsibility for the implementation of the Proposal for Action to the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Church members to restore justice/righteousness (pono) and exercise self-determination, self-sufficiency and a self-governance model for the 21st century. The proposal:

Calls on the United Church of Christ, through its agencies of the Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM), the Wider Church Ministries (WCM) (including the Common Global Ministries with the Disciples of Christ), the Council of Racial and Ethnic Ministries (COREM) bodies including the Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries (PAAM), together with the Hawaii Conference of the United Church of Christ (HCUCC) and the Council of Conference Ministers of the UCC--to initiate measures to compel the U.S. President, the U.S. Congress and the related agencies of the U.S. government to provide a more just compensation for the Hawaiian people affected by the 1893 illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom government and the ongoing prolonged illegal occupation of the Hawaiian Kingdom.
Calls on the United Church of Christ, through its President and all of its agencies to petition the U.S. Government to justly compensate the Hawaiian Kingdom and its people for the cost of 128 years of illegal occupation in the Hawaiian Kingdom and all other costs associated with similar situations.

Calls on the United Church of Christ to support a delegation from AHEC and all other associated UCC churches and organizations to support a unified delegation for justice/righteousness and self-governance for Hawaiians, all natives, blacks and people of color to support one another for justice.

Calls on the Hawaii Conference to allow the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches to become a self-governing, self-sufficient entity to respect and develop relating to all spheres of life—especially religious, moral, political, social, economic and cultural.

IV. STATEMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION

The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

V. STATEMENT OF THE FUNDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The funding for the implementation of the Proposal for Action will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.