

Missionaries come to Hawaii

Arriving shortly after the sandalwood and whalers were Protestant missionaries from Boston, Massachusetts. When they landed in Hawai'i in 1820, they came upon a nation that had recently got rid of the kapu system - the social system that set down the religious, social, and political laws of kingdom. They quickly realized that first converting the powerful ali'i wahine (*women rulers*)



would lead to the success of converting the commoners. Ka'ahumanu's (Kuhina Nui) conversion to Christianity in 1825 and Ke'ōpūkani's (Kamehameha's sacred wife) after, meant that the mission now had important people in power to influence others.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions sent the first group of Protestant missionaries to the Hawaiian Islands in 1820 with instructions to raise up "the whole people to an elevated state of Christian civilization..." The three methods to be used to fulfill this goal were preaching, teaching and printing.

Ka'ahumanu's Bible, a large two-volume book printed in London in 1817, is a good example of the attempts made by missionaries to convert the Ali'i class to Christianity. Their success in converting ali'i to Christianity led the missionaries to move on to a plan to convert the much larger group of commoners through Christian-based education. Mission teaching groups soon spread. Missionary schools were opened throughout the islands, speeding up the numbers of Hawaiians who converted to Christianity. Christian Hawaiians were trained to become native teachers and pastors and to fill positions as leaders in the quickly developing western-style government that some in the mission helped to start.



These Protestant missionaries quickly became the new "kahuna"; spiritual and political advisors to the high chiefs. They helped to change Hawaiian laws to fit Christian beliefs, for example, banning the hula and the Hawaiian martial arts - Lua.

They created written Hawaiian language so that the Bible could be given to the more people. As well as, teaching Hawaiians to abandon their own culture for "civilized" Western ways.