

The Native Protestant Churches - of - Hawaii

By S. E. BISHOP.



REV. SERENO E. BISHOP, D.D.

Rev. Sereno Edwards Bishop, D.D., was born February 7, 1827, at Kaawaloa, in a native cottage about ten rods north of the present monument to Capt. James Cook. His father was the Rev. Artemas Bishop, missionary at Kailua from 1824 to 1836, and at Ewa, Oahu, from 1836 to 1856. The son was sent, like most of the children of missionaries, to the States at the age of thirteen. He graduated at Amherst College in 1846, and at Auburn Theological Seminary in 1851. After a year of ministerial service in various churches in New York State, he came back to Hawaii in January, 1853, having been absent thirteen years. Nine years were then occupied in the service of the American Seamen's Friend Society as Chaplain to seamen in Lahaina. The whalers having deserted that port, late in 1867, Mr. Bishop removed with his family to the remote station of Hana, Maui, where he labored for nearly four years as a missionary of the American Board. In July 1865, he removed to Lahainaluna, serving there as principal of

that institution for twelve years. In 1877, he removed to Honolulu, on account of nervous head trouble. Here Mr. Bishop was employed from 1880 to 1885 as an assistant in the Government Survey, and for seven years more in work as a private surveyor. From 1893 to 1898, he did considerable newspaper work, writing about 150 letters as a correspondent of the Washington Evening Star, and about 50 letters to the New York Independent. These letters were all written in support of the Queen's dethronement, and of the movement for Annexation. For fourteen and a half years past, Dr. Bishop has edited The Friend, a monthly religious journal, established by Rev. S. C. Damon in 1843. Besides such journalistic work, he has published several short papers, notably in 1884 an essay on the Krakatoa Red Glows which won the third of the Warner prizes offered. In June 1896, he received from his Alma Mater, fifty years after graduating, the degree of Doctor in Divinity. Dr. Bishop still resides in Honolulu, at the age of nearly 75, with strength still adequate for some work.

THESE CHURCHES were organized by the American Protestant missionaries, the first of whom arrived in 1820. With their great caution in receiving the heathen Hawaiians to baptism and church privileges, it was not until 1825 that the first church of native members was organized in Honolulu. By 1837 a total of 1168 persons had been admitted to church membership. In 1838-9 a mighty religious awakening pervaded the group, resulting in a total of over 20,000 church members out of a population of 120,000. With the present decrease of the pure Hawaiians to about 30,000, the protestant church membership has declined to 3,700, as officially reported in June, 1901. Estimating the pure Hawaiians as 29,000, this makes the membership about one-eighth of the whole. Affiliated with the actual members of the church may be estimated at least three times as many, so that one-half of the people may be considered as Protestants. The other half are mainly divided between the Roman Catholics and the Mormons. As a marked indication of the superior moral and social condition of native Protestant families may justly be cited

the fact that during the outbreak of cholera in Honolulu in 1896, involving over eighty cases, not a single case occurred in any household of the nearly 500 members of the Kawalahao church. The above given membership of 3,700 is distributed among 52 separately organized churches upon the five principal Islands, viz.: twenty on Hawaii, sixteen on Maui and Molokai, nine on Oahu, and seven on Kauai. The churches on Hawaii average 77 members, those on Maui and Molokai 42, on Oahu 122, and on Kauai 63. In charge of these fifty churches are thirty-eight native pastors and three white pastors. Many of these have charge of one or more neighboring churches. The totals of money raised among these churches in the year 1900-1 is as follows:

For pastors' support	\$14,798 95
For church building	9,277 70
For miscellaneous	7,116 55
For Hawaiian Board	998 45
Total	\$31,011 60

This would amount to over \$8 per mem-

ber, but it is proper to state that considerable amounts, possibly as much as one-half, are contributed in aid by friendly foreigners, and are counted in with the gifts of the native members.

These churches are organized into five Island associations, viz.: those of East Hawaii, West Hawaii, Maui and Molokai, Oahu, and Kauai. These local associations meet twice each year. The whole are also united into one large body known as "The Hawaiian Evangelical Association," which meets once in each year, and is attended by all pastors and affiliated ministers, and by lay delegates from each of the Island associations.

The government of the churches is nominally Congregational, but largely partakes of Presbyterian elements. The internal discipline of each church is practically in the hands of a body of lunas or elders, elected annually, supervised by the pastor. The Island Associations resemble Presbyteries in most of their functions. They ordain ministers, license preachers, install, dismiss and discipline pastors, try cases of discipline appealed to them from the churches, and exercise judicial functions generally, like Presbyteries.

The General (or Hawaiian Evangelical) Association has many of the functions of a Presbyterian Synod, exercising judicial and legislative powers as occasion arises. Its sessions are largely occupied with hearing and passing upon reports on the state of the churches in each Island Association, and statistical reports from each individual church. One of its duties is annually to elect in turn one-third of the members of a board, which is commonly known as "The Hawaiian Board," although its official title is "The Board of the Hawaiian Evangelical Association."

The Hawaiian Board is composed of from twenty-five to thirty members, each serving for three years. It is composed this year of twenty-nine members, there being nine white clergymen and six native ditto, with fourteen white clergymen and four native ditto, with one Chinese. Its officers for the present year are the following:

- Hon. J. B. Atherton, President.
- Hon. Henry Waterhouse, Vice President.
- Rev. O. P. Emerson, Corresponding Secretary.
- Rev. T. Leadingham, Recording Secretary.
- Theo. Richards, Treasurer.
- F. J. Lowrey, Auditor.

This Board directs all of the missionary work of the churches, especially among the Chinese, Portuguese, and Japanese population, as well as among the Hawaiians. It supervises a considerable educational work, and that of publication. A former large foreign missionary work in the Gilbert Islands has mainly passed over to the American Board. The duties of the Board are many, including an annual expenditure of nearly \$40,000, mainly contributed by benevolent white residents. The chief official ones are the Corresponding Secretary and the Treasurer, the duties of both of whom are onerous.

Maintained by the Hawaiian Board, under the superintendence of the Rev. John Leadingham, is the "North Pacific Mission Institute," now in active operation for 24 years, for the training of pastors and missionaries. Nearly all of the present native pastors are graduates of this institution.

The largest of the native churches are:

	Members.
Hale Church in Hilo	264
Kohala do.	213
Kailua do.	244
Kaunakapili do.	198
Kaunawapili do.	198

As compared with Christian churches in America, it cannot be claimed that the moral standard of domestic life among these Hawaiian Christians is an elevated one. Some of the habitual immorality of their heathen forefathers survives among them, and some of the ancient superstition, bringing them more or less under the influence of heathen sorcerers. Hawaiians have their own peculiar infirmities of character, as well as as proclivity to the vices of the whites, and from these the native church members are not exempt. But they are progressing, and the standard of morality in the churches is unquestionably higher than it was even one generation ago. The writer feels fully assured that whatever is best in native Hawaiian life is to be found in these churches.

Reminiscences of Early Christian Days in Hawaii.

I am asked by the editor to add to the foregoing statistics some personal memories of the early times when the labors of the early missionaries, of whom my father was one, were beginning to bear fruit. My earliest recollections date back over seventy years, including the aspects



OLD PALI ROAD.
(Photo by Hitchcock.)