

History of Ko`olau Baptist Church

“Celebrating the Faithfulness of God”

Pastors:

Founding Missionary Pastor Max Helton 1965-1972

Missionary Pastor Jim Warren 1972-1976

Missionary Pastor Dave Marcum 1977-1980

Pastor Al Anger 1980-1990

Pastor Tom Bowlin 1991-2003

Interim Pastor John Goodale 2003-2006

Pastor John Sass 2006-2010

Pastor Skip Woodfin 2011-Present

Ko'olau Baptist Church began in 1965 when a young missionary couple, Max and Jean Helton arrived with a burden to reach people with the gospel and establish a local, independent Baptist church. The Heltons were missionaries with Baptist International Missions Incorporated (BIMI). They had been missionaries in the Cayman Islands when their beautiful baby daughter Leah was born with severe heart problems. The Heltons took Leah to see a specialist in Tennessee. The doctor told the Heltons that Leah would need a certain level of care that was not available in the Caribbean. They would have to leave Grand Cayman.

It has been said that when God closes a door, He opens a window. It was clear that God was closing the door for the Heltons as missionaries in the Cayman Islands, but where would the Lord lead? Max gave the doctor three places that were on his heart. The doctor said only Hawaii would have the level of care that Leah would need. Yes, God had closed the door to the Cayman Islands, but great is God's faithfulness and the Lord opened the door to the Hawaiian Islands. Through God's providential leading Max and Jean Helton by faith moved even farther away from home to Hawaii

When the Heltons arrived in Hawaii the Lord led them to Kaneohe. They rented a home by what is now Windward Mall and began knocking on doors inviting folks to church. On April 5, 1965, Pastor Max Helton held the first service for Ko'olau Baptist Church in a classroom on the second floor of the He'eia Elementary School. There were six people in attendance; including Pastor Helton, his wife Jean, and their daughter Leah. The Lord blessed, people got saved and baptized. Soon, more room was needed so the church began meeting in the cafeteria of King Intermediate School.

As the church grew, Pastor Helton began praying about purchasing land for a future building. Although there were several properties available, the Lord was faithful to provide nearly 2.5 acres in the recently developed neighborhood of Kapunahala right on the corner of the Likelike and Kahekili highways. The location was a highly visible spot that could not be overlooked. It was perfect for folks living on the windward side of Oahu as well as those coming from Honolulu. Missionary Arza Brown from Anahola Baptist Church on Kauai (now with Grace Baptist Church on Maui) visited the property with Pastor Helton when it was nothing more than an old banana patch overgrown with weeds. The people gave and with the help of many BIMI missionaries around the world the money was raised and the land was purchased in 1967.

At our church's 40th anniversary, Pastor Helton shared that our first permanent building, the A-frame sanctuary was built with the help of a contractor from California, Tom Paige. When Bro. Paige landed at the Honolulu airport, Pastor Helton picked him up and while getting something to eat at the old Kelly's diner on Nimitz highway, Brother Paige sketched out a simple plan for the building. Pastor Helton then went to the building department and asked for a permit, they told him he would have to wait and get several additional things done first. Pastor Helton told them that they didn't understand, "The cement is coming Saturday." The building department gave Pastor Helton the permit the same day! Great is God's faithfulness.

God blessed and the church continued to grow. So did the Helton's family; their family now included twin girls Melanie and Elaine, and Christa and Becky in addition to Leah. In 1972, God opened another door for Pastor Helton. An opportunity was extended to him to minister at Hyles-Anderson College and so by faith, the Heltons resigned as missionaries with BIMl and family moved to Indiana. Later brother Helton would pastor in White Plains New York and become the founder and senior chaplain of the Motor Racing Outreach in 1988.

God is faithful; His mercies and compassions fail not. This truth is clearly evident in the way God has provided several good men who have served as our pastor while also serving as missionaries with BIMl. One of these missionaries, Brother Al Anger served in a very special capacity while at Ko'olau Baptist Church.

Born and reared in New York, Brother Anger joined the U.S. Air Force after high school and was stationed in Europe where he got saved and grew in the Lord. After completing his enlistment he surrendered to God's call on his life and went to Bob Jones University. Because of the life-changing decisions Brother Anger made while a servicemen and his love for the members of the US military, brother Anger surrendered to serve the Lord as a missionary to the U.S. military.

In 1970 after deputation, Brother Anger and his wife Rosalie arrived in Hawaii with their children: Tim, Dan, and Beth. They came as missionaries with BIMl to start a ministry to U.S. Servicemen and they worked out of Ko'olau Baptist Church. Burdened with a desire to see young servicemen saved and disciplined, Brother Anger was characterized by the five points of his "Five Star Christian" sermon. If we are going to be Five Star Christians, then we need to be **Saved, Sanctified, Surrendered, Serving, and Soul-Winning (needs verified)**. Brother Anger often challenged servicemen in these five areas and many young men were saved during this time and surrendered to preach the gospel. The Lord was blessing Brother Anger's ministry to servicemen when Pastor Helton resigned and the church asked Brother Anger to become our pastor while we waited for BIMl to help us find another missionary to be our pastor.

During this time another BIMl missionary, Jim Felton and his wife Bonnie came to Hawaii as well and were a big help to the ministry. Brother Felton was also burdened to reach U.S. servicemen and he helped Brother Anger with a servicemen's center down in Waikiki on Kuhio Avenue.

Later, that same year, the church would call Pastor Jim Warren to be our next pastor. Pastor Warren and his wife Helen came to Hawaii in 1972. Once settled, Pastor Warren led the church to construct a two-story building to serve as a parsonage and a Servicemen's Center. The Servicemen's Center was located on the first floor with a bunk room where the men could spend the weekend away from the base, a separate bedroom for a director, a living room for Bible studies, and a kitchen for home cooked meals. The second floor was a separate three-bedroom, two-bath home that served as a parsonage. During this time Pastor Warren also led the church to found Windward Christian School in 1974. The school

used Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum. The school originally met in an old, portable real estate office, but it quickly outgrew the space and expanded into the church auditorium. In 1976 the church was also able to acquire two, double-wide mobile homes for office space and housing. It was also during this time that the city forced the church to sell a portion of our property where our playground field is today. The church used the money to make some much needed improvements to the church's infrastructure, like the moss rock wall around the two-story house and the parking lot in front of the office. That same year, Pastor Warren resigned as our pastor and returned to the mainland for a furlough to visit his supporting churches. When he left, Pastor Anger once again stepped in for a brief period of time as our pastor until a new missionary pastor could arrive. It was also during this time that a Bible Institute was started and evening classes were held at the Servicemen's Center. A good number of military men got their start in serving the Lord through the Bible Institute.

Early in 1977, the Lord was faithful and provided another BIMl missionary to serve as our pastor, David Marcum. The Marcums were busy serving as missionaries in Japan for a number of years and were very successful, but the Lord had other plans for them and He led them to Hawaii in part because of the special needs of their son. Pastor Dave, his wife Alice and their three children Cindy, Amy, and Andy fit well into Hawaii culture because of the large Japanese influence in the islands. During his tenure, Pastor Marcum hosted a weekly radio show where he preached and taught in Japanese. The church also added Sunday school classrooms on to the back of the church during this time. In 1978 Pastor Marcum taught a handful of young, single marines how to lead others to Christ. Within a few short years, the Single's Ministry had grown and it was not uncommon to have 20-30+ single servicemen at church sitting in the front rows. In 1978, the church participated in an island wide evangelistic service with Jack Van Impe at the Waikiki Shell. The singing and preaching was great and the pastors all looked sharp sitting on the platform in their "aloha" sports coats and jackets. It was a great week. It was also during Pastor Marcum's tenure that evangelist John R. Rice came and preached. The church had been praying for 500 people to attend the services and God was faithful. We had just over 500 in church that Sunday morning, including one escapee from the state mental hospital!

This is probably a good place to pause and mention how God was working in people's lives through the ministry of Ko'olau Baptist Church. From the early 1970's and into the 1980's a number of men and women were faithful to obey God's call to serve Him. For instance, there was a young baseball player from Castle High School who got saved, baptized, and grew in the Lord. His name was Kam Ching. He served as our youth leader and later would marry Miranda Camp, one of his students! After Bible college and raising support, Pastor Kam Ching started the Independent Baptist Church of Honolulu. There was also Pete Ard and his wife Jean. Pete was a Marine Corps officer stationed in Hawaii who resigned his commission to go to seminary to become a missionary to the Jews in Buenos Aires. It was during this time that John Goodale also started to come to church. After Bible college, he and Selene would come back to join our church staff. Likewise, there was another young marine named Steve Szukala. He married Mrs. Dias's oldest daughter, Cathy. They would also come back to Hawaii after Bible college. Brother Steve was our youth pastor and then later he would start Lokahi Baptist Church in Mililani. Ben Usita also joined our staff in the early 1980's after arriving from the Philippines. Brother Ben was our choir director and Filipino Sunday school teacher. Mrs. Usita would end up teaching 32 years in our school. Later brother Ben would start Island Baptist Church in Kalihi, out of our church. There was also another young couple who joined our staff in the summer of 1980, brother and Mrs. Wayne Surface. Brother Surface came to work with our youth, lead the school, and help in the ministry. In 1985, the Surface family left to go back to the mainland to raise support. When they returned to Hawaii, the Lord led Pastor Surface to start Ohana Baptist church in Honolulu.

These are only a few of the men and women whom God, who is faithful in all things, called during this time to serve Him in full time Christian service. As best we can remember, there were others whom God would call from our church during the 70's and early 80's. This list of men included: Clint Akins, he was the first single serviceman to go to Bible College from our church to serve the Lord. There was also Bob Ballou. He started a ministry of sending shipping containers full of Sunday school materials, printing presses, and other Bible literature to the Philippines. These items were given out free to local churches. Steve Leathely went to Kosrae as a missionary for two terms before taking a church in Ohio where he still pastors. After serving in the Marine Corps, Ron Stratman led our servicemen's ministry, then went to Bible College and is now pastoring in Indiana. After retiring from the Marine Corps, Gary Heinz began working full-time reaching members of the US Military. Kevin Rohm also surrendered to serve the Lord and he is a pastor in North Carolina.

In June of 1980, Pastor and Mrs. Marcum returned to the mainland for furlough, later brother Marcum would serve as the General Director for TITUS International. However, when the Marcums left Hawaii, once again the church asked Pastor Anger to serve as our missionary pastor. Pastor Anger agreed, provided the church would become a self-supporting, indigenous church. This meant the church would no longer be relying on the help of BIMl and the supporting churches of our missionary pastors. By faith, the church agreed and in the summer of 1980, the church called Pastor Anger for the third time to become our pastor.

God blessed and during the next eleven years Pastor Anger led the church to extend the church auditorium and add two new classrooms. The servicemen's ministry continued to thrive. The busses were full of children coming to Sunday school and a bus barn for maintenance was constructed. The school ministry was growing and the church changed the school's name from Windward Christian School to Ko'olau Baptist Academy in order to be more closely and properly identify the school ministry with the church. People were being saved and baptized. The church also participated in another island wide revival service during this time with evangelist Ron Comfort. The churches rented a large tent and set it up at Keehi Lagoon Park. The services were packed and the altar was full with every night with many decisions being made for Christ.

Then the Lord burdened Pastor Anger's heart to return to the mission field. In June of 1990, the Angers left Hawaii to raise support. His plan was to provide short term relief to missionaries with BIMl who needed someone to help them watch over their young churches while they went back to the mainland for furlough. The Angers were such a great blessing to our church, now the Lord was going to use them to be a blessing to many more people around the world.

When Pastor Anger resigned, the church was faced with the daunting task of finding a new pastor. The Lord was faithful and He led the church to contact Thomas Bowlin. Tom and his wife Shirley had spent 23 years in the Air Force. He was saved in 1976 at Maranatha Baptist Church in Okinawa. After Bible college he joined BIMl as a missionary to the U.S. military and pastored a military church in Yokoska, Japan. In January, 1991 the church called Pastor Thomas Bowlin to be our next pastor.

For the next 14 years, Pastor Bowlin led the church while Mrs. Bowlin taught 6th grade. The Lord continued to bless. In the 1990's new government rules and regulations made it financially difficult to keep our old busses on the road. Once again, when the Lord closes one door, He often opens another door. During Pastor Bowlin's tenure, church's school ministry was growing. Pastor Bowlin would help found the American Association of Christian Schools - Hawaii, a local state association of Christian Schools. The school also joined the American Association of Christian Schools (AACS), a national

organization of Christian schools. With the growth of the school, the church converted the bus maintenance barn into a new high school building. Under Pastor Bowlin's leadership, the Lord blessed and the church was able to add more missionaries. People continued to get saved, baptized, and added to the church. Then, Pastor Bowlin was diagnosed with cancer. In October, 2003, Pastor and Mrs. Bowlin resigned and moved to Spokane, Washington to be closer to their children and grandchildren.

From October 2003 to June 2006, John Goodale served as our interim pastor until the church called Pastor John Sass to be our next senior pastor. Brother Sass was saved through the ministry of our sister church, Ohana Baptist Church while he was stationed here as a marine. He would end up marrying Suzette Dias from our church. Later John and Suzy would join our staff working with our Single's Ministry before going to the Big Island of Hawaii to start Lighthouse Baptist Church. In 2006, Pastor Sass resigned his position on the Big Island and the Lord opened the door for him to come as our next pastor. John, Suzy, and their five children, Alethia, Hosanna, Sethany, Jonathan, and Gideon settled into their new home on the church property. Pastor Sass enjoyed preaching and teaching the Bible.

As the church grew, Pastor Sass hired John Glenn (not the astronaut) to help in the ministry by leading our single adult ministry and to help with maintenance around the property. Pastor Sass had led John to the Lord while they were stationed here together. Like others before him, John married one of our school teachers, Nicole Gardner. Together, with their four children, Josiah, Seth, Shiloh, and Ty they served faithfully until the Lord called them as missionaries to the U.S. military in Italy. They have returned to the Big Island of Hawaii and are serving in a Mission church there.

In June of 2010, Pastor Sass and his family moved to California where he worked for Lancaster Baptist Church and West Coast Baptist College for a year before taking a new pastorate in Wisconsin where they are still today serving the Lord. Later that year, missionary Skip Woodfin was called to be our next and present pastor.

Pastor and Mrs. Woodfin are from Texas. After graduating from Bible College, Pastor Woodfin worked as a youth pastor for a large church in DFW area before starting a church in Junction, Texas. While they were there, they saw people saved and baptized. Pastor Woodfin led the church in the purchase of land and the construction of a church building. The Lord was blessing, but He was also burdening Pastor Woodfin the need for more churches to be started, especially in Hawaii. In 2000, the Lord opened the doors and led Pastor Woodfin and his wife Dana, along with their three children Jacob, Caleb, and Katie to Hawaii as missionaries to start local churches. After serving the Lord in Hawaii for eight and half years, the Lord then led the Woodfins to Indonesia as missionaries. It was a great time for them of seeing people saved, churches started and the beginning of a Bible college. When considering a move to a new area in Indonesia, the Lord burdened Pastor Woodfin to return to Hawaii to become our next pastor. On January 9, 2011 the church called Skip Woodfin to be our new pastor.

Since Pastor Woodfin's return to Hawaii the church has seen good growth. People are being saved and baptized. Many aspects of the church campus have been remodeled, renovated, and beautified. A master plan for the church property has been adopted and the permission phase of a Master Plan for the church property is moving forward which includes a new church auditorium and a two story elementary building. Attendance is up and so is giving, especially to missions. We have seen a new family a year surrender to full time Christian service as missionaries and pastors from our church. Pastor Woodfin has led the church to start Hawaii Baptist College and have had three graduates. Likewise, new adult Sunday school classes have been started and under Pastor Woodfin the church has begun a new, coordinated Sunday school curriculum and program.

When we look back over the past fifty-five years of God's faithfulness, we are amazed by how God has worked. Beginning with six people at that first service on a second floor classroom at Heeia Elementary School to where we are today, and the thousands of lives that have been touched by God in between. It is always good to reminisce, but it is more exciting to think about what the Lord is going to do in the next fifty-five years!