

HISTORY OF MAKAKILO BAPTIST CHURCH

The history of Makakilo Baptist Church is a study of what a small group of Christians can do when under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The number of lives touched and changed by this ministry are truly uncountable, as many are active military or otherwise transitory and are currently residing all over the country, many in mission work themselves. One visit to this church of many nationalities makes it obvious that we are an “international body”, a fact celebrated annually in November. Our story is summarized in the following timeline:

1963 -- First Baptist Church of Waipahu, Hawaii, voted to start a new work in Makakilo City as a mission of the Southern Baptist Convention, purchasing a house located at 92-539 Ualehei St. in Makakilo with a \$15K capital grant from the Home Mission Board.

1964 -- Named Makakilo Baptist Mission, the new work was led by Mrs. Virginia Lake, a missionary under the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and Mr. Lyle Pierce, who was employed at Barbers Point Naval Air Station and later became the mission's first pastor. Sunday School classes began with 36 in attendance. Vacation Bible School was another ministry started that proved very popular in this small community. Several other people served as bi-vocational pastors and many military families attended as well as locals. Even till today, we are blessed with an active military presence in the church.

1968 -- With the help of the Hawaii Baptist Convention's Pastoral Aid Program, the mission was able to purchase a parsonage and call Raymond Lau, Associate Pastor of the Chinese Baptist Church of Houston, Texas, as our first full time pastor. Rev. Lau and his wife Alice, instilled in us a trait of Christian love and hospitality that remains strong today.

1971 - 1976 -- Under Pastor Lau's leadership, the mission was organized into a church on May 28, 1971. Also, in 1973, the property on Makakilo Drive was purchased in leasehold, funds were secured, and two buildings with a lanai in between were constructed: a multi-purpose building with offices and kitchen, and the other consisting of classrooms, restrooms and storage space. The multi-purpose building served as our sanctuary. The new buildings were dedicated on May 25, 1975. The church lost no time in starting a preschool as a service to the community and as a Christian outreach. We started with 37 children. Besides Sunday worship and Sunday School, Men's and Women's fellowships flourished. We began sharing our classrooms with non-profit groups in the evening as a service to the community, and continue to do so to this day.

1977 -- After Rev. Lau was called to become pastor at University Ave. Baptist Church, the body searched and called Bruce Edwards who had served as President Carter's pastor in Plains, Georgia. He became our second full time pastor and also served as Preschool Director. Preschool enrollment reached 75 children with half-day, three-quarter day, and full day sessions. Makakilo Baptist Preschool became an excellent Christian preschool using largely Montessori methods.

Pastor Edwards and his wife Sandra, spent much of their ministry building our Bible Studies, Sunday School, Church Council, Deacon Ministry, WMU, Church Choir and the expansion of our facilities.

1981 -- Under the Hawaii Baptist Convention's council and Pastor Edward's vision, the first "Together We Build Campaign" was launched to raise funds for building repair, mortgage payoff, and retention of an architect to produce a master plan that would provide more space. At this time we had 203 resident members and 57 non-members.

1985 -- The second "Together We Build Campaign" was started to complete funding for Phase 1 construction of an educational building with five classrooms, an office and a pastor's study. As a result of these two campaigns and the selling of the parsonage, the debt was paid off, remedial repairs to the original building accomplished and the new building built without debt.

1988 -- A third Challenge to Build campaign was needed to purchase our land on Makakilo in fee simple as the lease was opened to purchase. There were 175 resident members and 59 non-members by yearend 1992.

Circa 1991 -- The land loan was paid-in-full and a ceremonial "Burning of the Mortgage" took place at a special church celebration.

1991 -- With the transition of Pastor Bruce Edwards to the Director of Missions position for the Hawaii Baptist Convention, our church called Pastor Lefanonga "Ray" Viliamu as our third full-time pastor. This pastor and his wife Lena, placed a great emphasis in the early 90's on making worship meaningful, enjoyable, uplifting, and group participatory and introduced our first "praise choir" and band. Simultaneously, ushers and greeters were trained to provide a "visitor friendly" first impression to our guests. The service was directed toward language and activities that could be understood by the un-churched. Modern translation scripture readings, drama, Christian hula and other performing arts started to appear.

In 1992 classes in Experiencing God by Henry T. Blackaby were implemented and had a great spiritual effect on the congregation. They were so successful that all members were encouraged to take the classes in small groups.

The Family Ministry was initiated in the early 90's as well. In obedience to the Lord's leading, gathering together in small groups has deepened the personal level of relationships in the body. The lives of modern families are shared in these home meetings under the leadership of facilitators and interns. These leaders (called facilitators) serve in a pastoral/deacon capacity under the Family Ministry captain and pastor. The people are experiencing the sense of true family and caring. Bible Study is directed toward application to life situations.

Under Pastor Viliamu's leading, the Council also voted in the practice of a New Membership Ceremony which takes place on our once a month Sunday evening Lord's Supper Service. The new member commits himself to the body by offering a vocal testimony and agreeing to the New Member Covenant. The members, in turn, commit themselves to the new member by reading a covenant. It is a joyous ceremony enjoyed by all. New members are asked to commit to the following:

1. Take the Experiencing God course
2. Join a Family Ministry group
3. Serve in at least one weekly ministry in the church
4. Support the church financially.

1996 -- In order to reach out to children and un-churched families during the week, MBC began an AWANA program. On any given Friday night from September through May, 100 or more children are in attendance for fun and Christian training under the leadership of 25 + Christian adults. The love and affection shown these children make a tremendous impact on their lives and only the Lord knows the lasting results that AWANAS will have on these children's lives and future.

Shared leadership is practiced in the total program. The team captains are the true leaders of various ministries. They are directly responsible for the direction of their ministries under the pastor's supervision and are required to attend regular Council meetings. Missions are a "hands on" product with the body at Makakilo Baptist Church. Mission teams have been sent out to start: the Abundant Life Christian Fellowship in Ewa Beach, church building repair on various islands in Hawaii, and much construction work as well as spiritual work in Independent Samoa, American Samoa and Fiji. Our multi-cultural church body with the addition of military families and skilled workers has given us a great resource of workers for the harvest, many lay preachers and teachers and a wealth of Christian thinking and diversity.

2009 -- After 15 years of planning, our new Sanctuary was dedicated on Nov. 28. The first multi-purpose building was torn down and a new sanctuary built, which doubles our capacity for worship services. We also completed a new nursery, new bathrooms and kitchen, and renovated the central covered lanai. Well over half of the cost of the \$1.2 million project has been donated by the congregation already and we expect the construction loan to be paid off promptly. Having members do a lot of the inside finishing work saved the church a lot of money as well.

The year 2009 will be our beloved Pastor Ray Viliamu and his wife Lena's last year with us after serving the Lord at Makakilo Baptist Church for 18 years. They will be taking a much needed rest.

To quote our former member Col. Stan Sagert, once president of Hawaii Baptist Academy:

"The history of Makakilo Baptist Church is a chronicle of God's providence in action. He gave Mrs. Lake a vision for Makakilo 10 years before anyone else or any other group realized the need. This resulted in Makakilo being offered the property on Makakilo Drive. The leaders that followed were placed at Makakilo at the exact time with the exact leadership needed to fulfill the exact niche in God's plan and purpose. Amid challenging times, circumstances, and changing membership, the Lord was always present in the middle of a loving and caring body willing to follow the vision of their leaders. The future is bright under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The Lord is good! His mercy endureth forever!"