

# Bonner Querschnitte

## Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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## BQ 626 – No. 08/2020

### On the trails of the first missionaries in Hawaii

(Bonn, 07.02.2020) Christine and Thomas Schirmmacher from the leadership team of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) visited the Hawaiian islands of O'ahu and Hawaii/Big Island on the trails of the first Christian missionaries.

“Since my work on my dissertation about Theodor Christlieb (1833–1899) and his role model, Rufus Anderson (1796–1880), whose main work was a historiography of the beginnings of the mission on Hawaii, at that time still called the Sandwich Islands, it has been a dream of mine to visit the places of the beginnings of Christianity on Hawaii one day,” says Thomas Schirmmacher. Rufus Anderson was director of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). Schirmmacher published some writings by and about him in German in 1993.

On Hawaii/Big Island, the German visitors visited the oldest church in Hawaii in the coastal town of Kailua-Kona, the Mokuaikaia Church, built by local Christians between 1835 and 1837, whose preceding building was built in 1820 by the first missionaries on the Sandwich Islands.

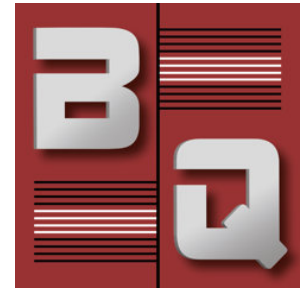
In Honolulu, they visited the Kawaiaha'o Church, O'ahu, built in 1836–1842 by the first Christians with 14,000 slabs of coral rock from an offshore reef, surfaced by divers.

They also visited the third oldest church of Hawaii, the catholic cathedral built in 1840–1843.

The headquarters of the first Sandwich Islands Mission 1821–1863, whose three houses were built in 1821, 1831 and 1841, are now known as the Hawaiian Mission Houses



The oldest church in Hawaii, on the island of Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, the Mokuaikaia Church, from 1837, which replaced the first church of missionaries from 1820 © BQ/Thomas Schirmmacher



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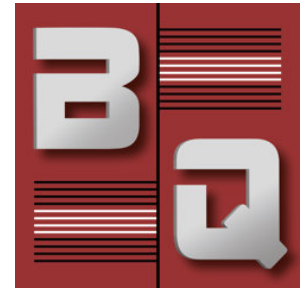
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(Historic Site and Archives) Museum. The journey of the missionaries by boat took 165 days in 1819/1820. “Most impressive to me,” said Schirmacher, “was the old printing press on which the first Bible translation was printed.”

Today about three quarters of the inhabitants of Hawaii are Christians, roughly one quarter are Catholics, one quarter Evangelical Protestants, one quarter other Protestants.



The oldest church in Honolulu, the Kawaiaha'o Church, on O'ahu Island, built 1836–1842 from coral reefs © BQ/Thomas Schirmacher

### Literature on Rufus Anderson and Theodor Christlieb:

- Rufus Anderson. *A Heathen Nation Evangelized: History of the Sandwich Islands Mission*. Congregational Publishing Society: Boston, 1872.
- Thomas Schirmacher. *Theodor Christlieb und seine Missionstheologie*. EgfD: Wuppertal, 1985.
- Thomas Schirmacher (Hg.). „Die Zeit für die Bekehrung der Welt ist reif“: *Rufus Anderson und die Selbständigkeit der Kirche als Ziel der Mission*. Mit Beiträgen von Rufus Anderson, Theodor Christlieb, Josef Josenhans, Hermann Gundert. VKW: Bonn, 1993 (Nachdruck 1996).

### Downloads and Links:

- **Photo 1** and **photo 2**: The oldest church in Hawaii, on the island of Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, the Mokuaiakaua Church, from 1837, which replaced the first church of missionaries from 1820 © BQ/Thomas Schirmacher
- **Photo 3**: The oldest church in Honolulu, the Kawaiaha'o Church, on O'ahu Island, built 1836–1842 from coral reefs © BQ/Thomas Schirmacher
- **Photo 4**: The first mission station on Honolulu, Hawaii, is now a museum © BQ/Thomas Schirmacher
- **Photo 5**: The old printing press of the mission station on Honolulu, Hawaii © BQ/Thomas Schirmacher

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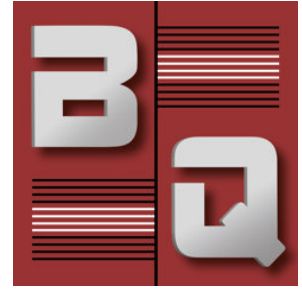
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- **Photo 6:** Plaque in memory of the first Christian king of Hawaii © BQ/Thomas Schirmmacher
- Wikipedia entry on the oldest church of Hawaii in Kona:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mokuaikaua\\_Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mokuaikaua_Church)
- Wikipedia entry on the second oldest church of Hawaii in Honolulu:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kawaiaha'o\\_Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kawaiaha'o_Church)
- Wikipedia entry on the Hawaiian Mission Houses (Historic Site and Archives) Museum: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawaiian\\_Mission\\_Houses\\_Historic\\_Site\\_and\\_Archives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawaiian_Mission_Houses_Historic_Site_and_Archives)
- Pew Research Center on Hawaii:  
<http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/hawaii/>
- Wikipedia entry on Rufus Anderson:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rufus\\_Anderson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rufus_Anderson)

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