

Story: The 'Apapane Music School

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Isaiah 40:21-31

Mark 1:29-39

I've told you a couple stories over the years about nene and their flight school. I'm also sure you've heard that a number of fish have swimming schools. Today's story is about some 'apapane and their music school.

Music school? Yes, indeed. 'Apapane have a pretty wide vocal repertoire – that is, they sing a lot of songs – and plenty of 'apapane create their own songs, frequently adapting from older melodies. They sing throughout the year, and they sing from a pretty early age. They are, you could say, natural singers.

A natural talent, however, becomes better and better when you work at it.

So the 'apapane have music schools. Rather like your Sunday School, or your daily school, you've got a gathering of students and a more experienced teacher. They're perched in a tree, though, not sitting on chairs with desks or a table.

This one music school, however, rather puzzled the students. It kept moving. They'd come to a big tree in the morning, following the sounds of the teacher singing. She'd have them singing with her for a couple hours, then take a break for a meal, and they'd scatter about the nearby oh'i'a trees collecting nectar and insects.

To start class again, she'd start singing – from a different tree.

In fact, it was always a different tree. It was a different tree every morning, it was a different tree after lunch, it was a different tree after mid-afternoon snack, it was a different set of trees every single day.

The teacher's singing would bring in new students sometimes, 'apapane who hadn't been in the neighborhood of yesterday's tree might hear her voice from this morning's tree. As older students were quietly told that they'd completed their program, new students from new sections of the forest kept joining. It meant that the group never sounded completely polished, with long-trained singers perched near brand new singers, and it never actually ended, just cycling on.

This bothered one of the students. He thought it made much more sense to get a group together, train them together, and graduate them together. You've probably noticed that it's

what humans do with schools most of the time. He went to the teacher during a lunch break and said, "Why do you move about like this? Why not stay in one place and teach there?"

The teacher looked at the young birds guzzling nectar and hunting insects in the tree and the trees around and said, "Do you think these trees will be able to feed these students this afternoon?"

The young 'apapane hadn't thought of that. They'd need trees that hadn't been hunted over later in the day.

"And how do you think," she asked, "other young 'apapane will find me if I stay in one place all the time?"

He didn't have an answer for that, either.

"This way works," she told him. "We have the food we need to keep us going, we have the music to practice to keep us learning, and we have the new students coming to keep all the 'apapane singing. We nourish ourselves. We learn new music. We welcome new singers."

She spread her wings. "Lunch is nearly over. It's time for a new tree. Let us go on!"

And they did.

by Eric Anderson