

**OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF THE JUSTICE & WITNESS  
MISSIONAL TEAM ON MAUNAKEA & TMT**

20 Iulai 2019

*“Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the ocean depths. Pour out your unfailing love on those who love you; give justice to those with honest hearts.”*

**Psalm 36:6a, 10 NLT\***

The United Church of Christ affirms its support of the rights of native and indigenous peoples in Hawai‘i, the United States, and around the world; and, has throughout its history, joined with native and indigenous peoples in defense of their traditional, cultural, and religious rights, and to protect their sacred spaces and precious natural resources.

The Bible identifies many sacred mountains that are significant to our spiritual journey, such as Ararat, Sinai, Nebo, Tabor, and the Mount of Olives, where Jesus lives out his last days on Earth, prays before his crucifixion, and ascends to heaven. Jesus, during the early days of his ministry, offers the Beatitudes in a well-known Sermon on the Mount.

The Bible also affirms our kūleana as God’s human creation to be good stewards of the precious, beautiful, and bountiful earth which God entrusted to our care.

We affirm with our Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) sisters and brothers that Maunakea is a sacred place; and, a place of cultural, spiritual, and historical importance.

We affirm that nā Kanaka Maoli, as descendants of the first human inhabitants of these islands, have the inherent right to have a say on what takes place on their sacred lands and how limited and precious resources are to be protected, preserved, and utilized for the benefit of all. We also affirm the right of nā Kanaka Maoli to actively seek the protection of their sacred spaces, including Maunakea from further degradation, desecration, and irreversible harm.

We recognize wholeheartedly that the passionate struggle to protect Maunakea from further harm results from the collective failure of various public and private entities, including the State of Hawai‘i and the University of Hawai‘i, to fulfill their moral and constitutional duty to protect and preserve land and natural resources in perpetuity.

We are encouraged that on July 19, 2019, over 100 religious and spiritual leaders, including many clergy and lay leaders of the Hawai‘i Conference UCC, the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches, Hawai‘i Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries, and our local churches, joined together to sign a *Religious Leaders Statement of Solidarity with Kanaka Maoli Protecting Sacred Mauna Kea* in a campaign organized by the Pacific Justice and Reconciliation Center.

\* **New Living Translation**

In solidarity with nā kia'i (protectors) at Maunakea, the native Hawaiian community, and their allies all around the world:

**THE JUSTICE AND WITNESS MISSIONAL TEAM OF THE HAWAI'I CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST STANDS IN FIRM OPPOSITION TO THIRTY METER TELESCOPE (TMT) PROJECT OPERATIONS IN HAWAI'I AND CALLS FOR AN IMMEDIATE AND INDEFINITE HALT TO ITS CONSTRUCTION ON MAUNAKEA.**

We wholeheartedly commend those who have gathered together at Maunakea on Hawai'i Island and who have conducted themselves in the spirit of *kapu aloha*, including our kūpuna (elders) on the front line, as well as our law enforcement officers and other public employees, many of whom share family connections. We recognize and commend all UCC clergy, leaders, lay people, partners, and affiliates who have joined the demonstrations at Maunakea.

We strongly oppose the arrest of our respected kupuna and all kia'i whose collective act of nonviolent, peaceful, and civil disobedience serves as a unified display of courage, sacrifice, and commitment to justice. Therefore, we call upon the Honorable David Ige, Governor of the State of Hawai'i, and the Honorable Harry Kim, Mayor of the County of Hawai'i, to stop any future arrest of nā kia'i assembled in protection of Maunakea and to remove all law enforcement presence except for the purpose of ensuring public safety.

We strongly urge Governor David Ige to rescind his emergency proclamation issued July 17, 2019, which has only served to further escalate tensions; and, we demand he make a formal and public apology to nā Kanaka Maoli for continuing to proclaim false narratives about nā kia'i and the situation at Maunakea. Such false narratives proliferate the notion that nā Kanaka Maoli are incapable of organizing and conducting themselves in a non-violent, peaceable, manner; and, those who are actively engaged in defense of their sacred spaces "need to be controlled." Though nā kia'i and nā Kānaka Maoli throughout the world have demonstrated otherwise, many in power continue to subject them to this paternalistic attitude which has no place in the twenty-first century.

We encourage all local churches of the Hawai'i Conference of the United Church of Christ to join us in praying for nā kia'i who have gathered together in defense of Maunakea and for their allies around the world and that all parties would continue to conduct themselves in the spirit of *kapu aloha*; to provide support to them in whatever way possible; to stand with them at Maunakea or at various demonstrations throughout the pae'āina; and, to call for an immediate resolution to this situation by bringing to an immediate and indefinite halt the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope at Maunakea.

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