

The 1989 Hawai'i Declaration of the  
Hawai'i Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism Conference  
**TOURISM IN HAWAII:**  
**Its Impact on Native Hawaiians And Its Challenge to the  
Churches**

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The Hawai'i Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism convened an historic conference on "Tourism in Hawai'i: Its Impact on Native Hawaiians and Its Challenge to the Churches." Over 75 people participated in the conference from August 25-28, 1989 at St. Stephen's Diocesan Center on O'ahu. Nearly half of these were Native Hawaiians from Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Lana'i, Maui and Hawaii, who represented their church, religious and native organizations. Other representatives of church and religious groups in Hawai'i as well as national and international visitors constituted the rest. For the purpose of this conference, Native Hawaiians were identified as those who trace their ancestry prior to 1778 A.D. in Hawai'i.

The conference was initiated and organized by the Hawai'i Ecumenical Coalition Tourism, the Hawai'i Council of Churches, American Friends Service Committee, and the Hawaii Conference of the United Church of Christ in collaboration with the Ecumenical Coalition for Third World Tourism (ECTWT) and the North American Coordinating Center for Responsible Tourism (CRT). The fourteenth international participants include representatives from ECTWT, CRT, the Third World Tourism Ecumenical European Net, the World Council of Churches (Program to Combat Racism), the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Belau, the Republic of Fiji, Japan, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and the Haida Nation of North America.

A program of exposure and field trips to see the realities of tourism in Hawai'i was organized for the international participants. At the conference itself, participants heard competent research on tourism in Hawai'i, agonizing testimonies from many Native Hawaiians who have been victimized by tourism as well as stories of successful native efforts in self-sufficiency and self-determination. The participants divided into seven groups whose discussions were reported back for plenary. Subsequent analysis and careful deliberation led us to the following conclusions:

- Contrary to the claims of its promoters, tourism, the biggest industry in Hawai'i, has not benefited the poor and the oppressed Native Hawaiian people. Tourism is

not an indigenous practice; nor has it been initiated by the Native Hawaiian people. Rather, tourism promotion and development has been directed and controlled by those who already control wealth and power, nationally and internationally. Its primary purpose is to make money.

- As such, tourism is a new form of exploitation. As a consequence, the Native Hawaiian people suffer the most; their culture has been increasingly threatened, their beaches and even their sacred sites have been taken over or intruded upon in order to build tourist resorts and related developments.

- Furthermore, tourism brings and expands the evil of an economy which perpetuates the poverty of Native Hawaiian people and which leads to sexual and domestic violence and substance abuse among the Native Hawaiian people. In addition, sexism and racism are closely interlinked with tourism. In short, tourism, as it exists today, is detrimental to the life, well-being and spiritual health of native Hawaiian people. If not checked and transformed, it will bring grave harm, not only to the Native Hawaiian people, but also to all people living in Hawai'i.

The plight of Native Hawaiian people is but one example of the destructive impact that tourism is having on indigenous people in communities around the world. All is not well in "paradise." Indeed,

A STATE OF EMERGENCY EXISTS IN REGARD TO THE SURVIVAL, THE WELL-BEING, AND THE STATUS OF THE NATIVE HAWAIIAN PEOPLE ON THE ONE HAND AND THE NEAR EXTINCTION OF THE PRECIOUS AND FRAGILE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE OTHER.

#### CALL TO THE CHURCHES

The churches have a moral obligation and responsibility to raise awareness in its congregations and in the State of Hawai'i about tourism's negative impacts and consequences on native Hawaiians. The churches are called upon to "wrestle against the principalities and powers" which exploit people.

Furthermore, the churches must examine their history of involvement in Hawaii's past, and recognize their role in the loss of Native Hawaiian control over their land and destiny and in the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. Such a recognition should lead to concrete actions on the part of the churches to rectify the wrongs which have been done.



Given these harsh and continuing realities, we, the participants of the conference, call upon the churches and religious institutions of Hawai'i, in consultation with Native Hawaiians, to initiate a process of reconciliation and reparations, as follows:

- Acknowledge the anger expressed by Native Hawaiian people for the past actions of the missionaries, their descendants, and the churches and institutions they Established;
- Recognize that this anger is an expression of the suffering of the Native Hawaiian people; and
- Publicly apologize to the Native Hawaiians within their own congregations and the larger Native Hawaiian community for the church's' involvement and participation in the destruction and erosion of Hawaiian culture, religious practices, land base, and the overthrow of Queen Lili'uokalani and the Hawaiian Monarchy.

#### I. PRIORITY RECTIFYING ACTIONS

We call upon the churches and religious institutions of Hawai'i to redress these injustices by advocating the following:

- A. The return of public and private trust lands to the control of the Native Hawaiian People; An immediate ban on all resort and related developments in those areas designated as sanctuaries by Native
  - B. Hawaiians, and in rural Hawaiian communities such as, Leeward and Windward Kaua'i, Leeward and Windward O'ahu, Moloka'i, Lana'i, East Maui and the districts of North Kohala, South Kona, and Ka'u on Hawai'i; and
  - C. Technical, financial and other support from the State of Hawai'i to Native Hawaiian projects which encourage economic self-sufficiency.
- Furthermore, we call upon the churches and religious institutions of Hawai'i to support the political claims of Native Hawaiians to establish a sovereign entity, separate from the existing State and Federal governments, in order that they may achieve self determination.

## II. PUBLIC WITNESS

We call upon the churches and religious institutions of Hawai'i to take a stand for social justice and engage in political actions, as follows:

- A. Make public an inventory of the holdings and use of all churches lands;
- B. Return those church lands which justly belong to the Native Hawaiian people;
- C. Reexamine the church lands and divest church funds currently being used for tourism purposes which negatively impact Native Hawaiians;
- D. Refuse to participate in the public blessing of those projects which adversely impact Native Hawaiians or the environment;
- E. Support worker demands for higher wages, a full time work week with benefits, and better working conditions in the tourist industry;
- F. Hold the tourist industry and government accountable for the social problems associated with tourism: increased crime, racism, sexual and domestic violence and disruption, substance abuse, housing costs, and land taxes; and
- G. Support policies to reverse current trends of tourist industry growth. The human and natural resources cannot withstand the near doubling of total annual tourists to Hawai'i from its current 6.5 to 11 million over the next two decades, projected by the Hawai'i Visitors Bureau.

## III. EDUCATION

We call upon the churches and religious institutions of Hawai'i to utilize and distribute educational materials and programs for both clergy and congregations in order to reevaluate misconceptions and dependency on tourism. These materials should:

- A. Focus on Native Hawaiian culture;
- B. Detail the negative effects of tourism on Native Hawaiian land and water rights, economy, and social life-style;
- C. Promote native Hawaiian self-sufficiency, sanctuaries, and sovereignty; and

D. Present a truthful view of Hawaiian history including the involvement of the church and the U.S. government in the loss of Native Hawaiian land and power, and the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy.

#### IV. RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICE

We call upon the churches and religious institutions of Hawai'i to be reminded that in God's house are "many mansions," and that "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof."

We call upon the churches and religious institutions of Hawai'i to acknowledge and respect Native Hawaiian rights to:

- A. Practice and participate in traditional ceremonies and rituals with the same protection offered all religions;
- B. Determine access to and protection of sacred sites and burial grounds, and public lands for ceremonial purposes; and
- C. Utilize and access religious symbols for traditional ceremonies and rituals.

We further call upon the churches to live in harmony with God's creation of land, water, and air; and to integrate the Native Hawaiian culture into their religious services. Finally we call upon the churches to work towards the reestablishment of one day each week for rest and sanctuary in order to strengthen family relations.

#### V. CONTRIBUTIONS

We call upon the churches and religious institutions of Hawai'i to:

- A. Provide spiritual support and a nurturing environment to the Native Hawaiian people;
- B. Provide monetary support, expertise, use of facilities, land, and building sites for Hawaiian people;
- C. Provide congregational support at Native Hawaiian public demonstrations;
- D. Designate one service and offering each year to address the adverse effects of tourism on Native Hawaiian people; and

E. Recognize and support by staffing and funding, the Hawai'i Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism.

## VI. CALL TO THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY

We call upon the global religious community to take actions as follows:

A. Recognize the negative impacts and consequences of tourism on Native Hawaiians and other indigenous people of the world;

B. Support the actions of the churches and religious groups of Hawai'i in consultation with Native Hawaiians to initiate a process of reconciliation and reparations;

C. Contribute funds and support and the Hawai'i Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism to act upon the 1989 Hawai'i Declaration;

D. Together with the Hawaii Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism, invite the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism to consider holding the "People's Forum on Tourism" in Hawai'i in 1993; and

E. Work with their own governments and businesses to stop further investments in the tourist industry in Hawai'i which have negative impacts and consequences on Native Hawaiians.



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#### **INITIATING SPONSORS**

Ecumenical Coalition for Third World Tourism  
Center for Responsible Tourism  
Hawai'i Council of Churches,  
American Friends Service Committee  
Hawaii Conference of the United Church of Christ

#### **CONTRIBUTORS**

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United Methodist Church, Hawai'i District  
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*He Alii no ka aina he kauwa ke kanaka  
The land is chief, the human is servant*