

Following the Path of Jesus: A comprehensive journey, entailing both compassionate love and calling out evil

A Resolution of Witness

Submitted by Dr. Paul von Oeyen, Rev. Larry Hoxey, Mr. Jerome Watson, and the Michigan
Conference United Church of Christ Prophetic Integrity MAT

BACKGROUND of RESOLUTION

Horrendous government is a regrettable fact of history. Ruinous wars and terrifying persecutions are organized under diverse forms of diabolical ideologies, variously parsed as authoritarian, autocratic, tyrannical, totalitarian, and despotic. Rather than reject such horrors, nations variously continue to embrace them.

The United States of late has not been immune from this trend. Neo-conservatives and their recent billionaire allies, using the white “Christian” Nationalist inspired Project 2025 playbook, have zealously escalated social and economic inequities. America’s illness is fueled by a populist base that misdirects personal disillusionment by scapegoating the sick and poor, minorities, and immigrants, and by targeting safety net programs, while also undermining science and education. The escalation of this process ultimately promotes fascism, an ideology which co-opts existing institutions through authoritarianism, nationalism, collusion with business, and a return to so called “traditional values”—all within an unrestrained capitalistic system rewarding corruption and avarice. (1)

The fascism that has plagued Italy, Germany, Spain, Hungary and present day Russia is racist, sexist, xenophobic and homophobic. Fascism scapegoats societal problems by targeting underprivileged, despised and vulnerable groups. Fascism distorts reality and twists meaning; it propagandizes language to enhance its hate agenda. Fascism creates a cult of personality between its iconic leader and the adoring followers. Fascism is also defined by a virulent pseudo religion, a blasphemous creation that fetishizes Christian symbols and vocabulary while subverting and perverting them, perpetrating a toxic religion antithetical to Jesus’ compassionate gospel.(2) Based on events occurring on a nearly daily basis, many people have concluded that America’s ideals are being hijacked and America is in grave danger of devolving into fascism. (3)

As United Church of Christ General Minister and President/CEO, Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson has said in her June 16, 2026 On My Mind blog post “Doubling Down,” “The word ‘politics’ is flung as a dirty word in the church. The notion that the church is not or should not be political is a false one when politics permeates the life of the church and the church has sought to influence political will throughout its history. Add to that, the prophetic witness required of the church demands being able to read and comment on the signs of the times, telling

BIBLICAL / THEOLOGICAL BASIS of RESOLUTION

We seek to be followers of God more so than simply Christians in name and rhetoric. Given our intention to receive and share God's love and truth, we must not remain silent in the presence of evil. Indeed, we have a sacred duty to call attention to and denounce evil, defined as the intentional and unjustified causing of harm. (1) And when elevated to a national level, evil becomes all the more destructive when perpetrated by a country's government.

Followers of God promote Jesus' teachings about compassionate love, such as the Golden Rule of doing unto others as we want done to us. (2) By their attitudes and actions, those who do the will of God follow Jesus' great commandment to love neighbor as self. (3) Those who strive to put Jesus' gospel message into practice have, among their sacred duties, the obligation to call out a nation's leaders and government whenever such a regime abandons the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger (immigrant), the naked, the sick, and the incarcerated. (4)

Jesus' teachings caution about false prophets deceiving by coming in sheep's clothing, wooing susceptible people who may not honor Jesus' admonition to recognize that bad trees bear bad fruit. (5) A nation's leaders who practice incessant lying, for example, are biblically referenced as a sign of Satan as the father of lies. (6) Further, religious persons who support a government's inhumane agenda mimic Christian vocabulary while perpetrating hate and other evils. (7) Deception, lies, arrogance, self-aggrandizement and an exhausting litany of similar traits are all signs that a leader is more of an antichrist than a savior (8). Followers of God rightly resist such shocking hypocrisies and destructive behavior.

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WHEREAS: White “Christian” Nationalism is harming America by attacking human rights and civil rights, and by practicing racism, homophobia, xenophobia and sexism rather than following Jesus’ gospel to love everyone; (1)(2)

WHEREAS: Following a fascist, authoritarian ideology, leveraging corruption and employing other nefarious means to consolidate power, further erodes human rights and civil rights; (3)

WHEREAS: Funding has been greatly reduced from vital programs such as SNAP food benefits for the hungry; subsidized health insurance has been severely reduced for those who cannot afford sufficient health care; and vital foreign aid programs feeding malnourished children and treating severe disease have been cut - resulting in hundreds of thousands of unnecessary deaths; (6) (7)

WHEREAS: Christians are compelled to follow the path of Jesus by calling out hypocrisy and evils such as hate and even lethal violence while speaking truth to power wherever we find Christian values being violated; (8)

WHEREAS: Ensuring eligible voters can exercise their right to vote without intimidation or impeded access is essential for the functioning of democracy and promoting values of love and inclusiveness; (9)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Michigan Conference United Church of Christ (UCC) upholds Jesus' gospel values of loving our neighbors (meaning everyone), feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, and welcoming the stranger (including immigrants).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Michigan Conference UCC encourages everyone to consider taking the Palm Sunday Promise (<https://mipalmsundaypath.org/promise>).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Michigan Conference UCC through its leadership, clergy and members, urge the Congress, the President, and state and local officials, to adopt policies and enact laws that uphold the universal values of loving our neighbors, including, but not limited to:

- alleviating hunger and making available needed health care, both here and abroad;
- stopping attacks on voting rights and making it easier for citizens to vote, not harder;
- rooting out corruption wherever it may be;
- adopting immigration reforms to treat all immigrants with humaneness and dignity; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED: that to ensure these needed reforms, the Michigan Conference UCC staff, Board of Directors, and congregations are encouraged to continue to cooperate with Inter-faith and secular non-partisan voter registration and voter education GET OUT THE VOTE activities, open to all eligible voters, to encourage voting to support the universal values of love and inclusiveness, and will work to preserve democracy and human and civil rights and freedoms.

FUNDING: The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the Michigan Conference and the funds available.

IMPLEMENTATION: The Board of Directors of the Michigan Conference United Church of Christ will determine the implementing body.

APPENDIX

ENDNOTES--PATH OF JESUS RESOLUTION

1. <https://www.newsweek.com>erosion-americas-civil-dialogue-path-recovery>, June 7, 2023
2. [https://wisconsonexaminer.com>2023>02>07>warning-wisconson-people-of-faith about-white-christian-nationalism](https://wisconsonexaminer.com>2023>02>07>warning-wisconson-people-of-faith-about-white-christian-nationalism)
3. [https://kellykidd.substack.com>project-2025-and-the-rise-of-modern-christian nationalism](https://kellykidd.substack.com>project-2025-and-the-rise-of-modern-christian-nationalism), July 23, 2024
4. [https://www.americanbar.org>groups>crsj>resources>human-rights>2026-march>trump-administrations-rampantpay-to-playcorruption-threatens-our democracy](https://www.americanbar.org>groups>crsj>resources>human-rights>2026-march>trump-administrations-rampantpay-to-playcorruption-threatens-our-democracy)
5. [https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/27/us/politics/trump-government lawyers.html?searchResultPosition=1](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/27/us/politics/trump-government-lawyers.html?searchResultPosition=1)
6. [https://carnegieendowment.org>posts>2026>01>shrinking-welfare-benefits-united states](https://carnegieendowment.org>posts>2026>01>shrinking-welfare-benefits-united-states)
7. [https://factually.co>fact-checks-politics-how-many-usaid-recipients-died-in-2025- ee67e6](https://factually.co>fact-checks-politics-how-many-usaid-recipients-died-in-2025-ee67e6)
8. Matthew 21:12-13 NRSV
9. [https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/training-and-education publications/human-rights-and-elections-handbook-international](https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/training-and-education-publications/human-rights-and-elections-handbook-international) 20 Sept. 2021

ENDNOTES—BACKGROUND

1. [What Does Fascism Really Mean? - What Is Fascism? | CFR Education](#) 2. For a more thorough explanation, please see the Resolution section on the biblical and theological rationale.
3. <https://factually.co › fact-checks › politics › is-usa-heading-towards-fascist-regime> 037424
4. www.ucc.org/doubling-down/

ENDNOTES—THEOLOGICAL BASIS

- [The Concept of Evil \(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy\); Evil, Christianity, and Public Discourse - Journal of Lutheran Ethics](#)
2. Matthew 7:12 NRSV
 3. Mark 12:28-33 NRSV
 4. Matthew 25:34-40 NRSV
 5. Matthew 7:15-19 NRSV
 6. John 8:44 NRSV
 7. Matthew 15:8 NRSV
 8. [What Biblical Criteria Do Scholars Use To Identify the...](#)