

CALLING THE CHURCH TO OPPOSE CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

1. WHEREAS Christian Nationalism is a cultural framework that fuses a radically exclusionary form of Christian supremacist identity with the political and civic participation of a nation's citizens through the appropriation of Christian language and imagery to amass political power; and
 2. WHEREAS Christian Nationalism is defined as a political ideology that seeks to merge Christianity and a particular type of American identity, distorting both the Christian faith and the United States Constitution often providing cover for white supremacy and racial subjugation (General Board of Church and Society, *Faith and Facts: Christian Nationalism*); and
 3. WHEREAS our Book of Resolutions states that "churches are not inherently superior to other participants; hence, their positions on particular issues of public policy are not above question or criticism. (Book of Resolutions, # 5102, "A Statement Concerning Church Participation in Public Affairs"); and
 4. WHEREAS Christian Nationalism, while present in varying degrees throughout modern history, has taken on a more aggressive and overt form in contemporary public life, including open demonstrations by various forms of known hate groups within the areas in which our churches serve; and
 5. WHEREAS Christian Nationalism promotes, with violent rhetoric and authoritarian approaches to civic life and public policy, an extremist ideology of social hierarchy, including white supremacy, antisemitism (and other forms of religious bigotry), xenophobia, persecution, and scapegoating of LGBTQ+ persons, misogyny, and ableism; and
 6. WHEREAS Christian Nationalism appropriates the name of Jesus Christ and the language and imagery of scripture to promote this ideology, in direct contradiction to the gospel Jesus preached, a liberating and loving gospel that the United Methodist Church embraces (Luke 4:16-21); and
 7. WHEREAS Christian Nationalism in practice denies the imago Dei in every human being (Genesis 1:26-27) as it seeks to diminish, control, subjugate, and even erase persons and points of view that do not concur with or conform to its ideology; and
 8. WHEREAS Christian Nationalism misrepresents our faith to our neighbors, thereby, turning people away from the life-giving love of God, by identifying Christianity with hate, social hierarchy, fear of the "other," and violence; and
 9. WHEREAS Christian Nationalism runs counter to the very heart of our Wesleyan identity by promoting division and stratification of the human family to the detriment of the unity and equality that our baptisms establish (Galatians 3:28) and the Lord's open table celebrates (1 Corinthians 11:17-34); and
 10. WHEREAS Christian Nationalism is currently making significant inroads as an effective political ideology, seizing power in civic life from hyper-local expressions of government to the halls of national policy-making institutions, as evidenced in a dramatic rise in book-banning, attacks on public education, LGBTQ+ erasure in public life, revisionist histories and curricula that refuse to reckon with systemic and individual racism, and many other institutionalized forms of bigotry and bullying; and
 11. WHEREAS in our baptismal covenant, we vow to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves;
1. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of the United Methodist Church denounces Christian Nationalism in all its forms as a distortion of the Christian faith, and commits to opposing it wherever it appears, for the sake of the gospel and the good of the human family; and

2. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of the United Methodist Church, in all its expressions, commit to educating ourselves and our constituencies about the societal and spiritual dangers of Christian Nationalism, how to talk about Christian Nationalism theologically, and how to counter it in both ecclesial and public life; and

3. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the general and regional expressions of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of the United Methodist Church will work to equip congregations and pastors with information and resources to faithfully oppose Christian Nationalism; and

4. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of the United Methodist Church, in all its expressions, will continue to prayerfully discern, confess, and repent of our own complicity with Christian Nationalism; and

5. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of the United Methodist Church calls on its leaders and members to take every possible opportunity to speak out and act urgently against Christian Nationalism, ensuring that the love of God known to us in Jesus Christ may not be distorted by this harmful appropriation of our faith, but boldly proclaimed with generosity and grace to all peoples.

Names of those submitting this resolution:

Tennessee Western Kentucky Board of Church and Society

Rev. Monica Mowdy, Caney Fork River District

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