



WE ALL BELONG CAMPAIGN

The January 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol was not only a wake-up call about the ongoing need to protect democracy but also a sobering reflection of the alarming re-emergence of “christian” nationalism and white supremacy in the United States. The religious symbolism on display in the insurrection including prayers to Jesus by rioters in the U.S. Senate were, sadly, not some anomaly.

A recent survey conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute found that about 29% of Americans (roughly 61 million adults) are either adherents or sympathizers of “christian” nationalism agreeing for example with the statement: “The U.S. government should declare America a Christian nation.” And more disturbingly, 17% of Americans (more than 35 million adults) agree with this statement: “The United States is a white Christian nation, and I am willing to fight to keep it that way.”

As a multi-faith, multi-racial organization, MICA H is taking a leadership role in the Milwaukee area to challenge these ugly realities particularly as we approach the 2024 Presidential elections and as Milwaukee prepares to host the Republican National Convention.

On August 3, 2023, the MICA H Religious Leaders Caucus launched the *We All Belong Campaign* to Protect Democracy, Reject “christian” nationalism, and Build Beloved Community. About 100 religious leaders from MICA H and non-MICA H congregations gathered at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., statue on the northside of Milwaukee for a rally and press conference followed by a march to Mt. Zion Baptist Church where essential information about the Campaign and its goals was shared. The multi-faith reality of MICA H was evident on August 3 in the range of faith traditions represented: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Unitarian.

On October 5 and 12, 2023, We All Belong Campaign Trainings for congregational leaders were attended by scores of clergy and lay leaders who now lead small group discussions in their congregations on 1) the definition and prevalence of “christian” nationalism, 2) a theological response, and 3) the connection between “christian” nationalism and white supremacy. Dozens of White Christian Nationalism trainings have been held and more are lined up. A training focusing on Beloved Community is currently being designed.

Leaders have volunteered to serve on the key teams of the Campaign: Education, Media, Voter Engagement, and Rapid Action. Volunteers were commissioned at a MICA H Public Meeting on October 26, 2023. The Campaign has rolled out with educational events, public actions, and intense efforts for voter engagement, voter registration, and voter turnout.

WAB has secured resolutions in support of the Campaign from the City of Milwaukee and the Milwaukee County Board. Key events are in the works: 1) an interfaith Prayer Vigil at Fiserv Forum on Saturday, July 13 and 2) A Rally for Democracy, featuring national religious leaders, on Sunday, July 14 – the eve of the opening of the Republican National Convention.

Here is the guiding statement of the We All Belong Campaign which was signed by religious leaders on August 3 and will be signed by thousands during the Campaign:



WE ALL BELONG CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

Protect Democracy

Our American democracy is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. It guarantees liberty and justice for all Americans. As people of faith, we understand Americans to include indigenous people, the original inhabitants of this land, as well as those who were forcibly brought to America and enslaved, and those who came as immigrants and workers. We believe America is stronger when justice, wealth, opportunity and representation are available to all Americans, rather than an elite few.

Reject "christian" Nationalism

"Christian" Nationalism is an ideology that merges Christian and American identities and, in doing so, distorts the Christian Gospel and the values of equality that guide our nation. Jesus commanded his followers to "love your neighbor as yourself" and defined 'neighbor' to include the poor and marginalized. Other religious faiths have similar teachings. Our democracy was founded on the rule of law, equal representation and separation of church and state. In contrast, "christian" nationalism would create a state religion and place social control, economic wealth, and political power in a favored elite and religious class. "Christian" nationalism often overlaps with and provides cover for white supremacy, racial and gender subjugation, and religious intolerance. It would fundamentally alter our society and government and must be rejected.

Build the Beloved Community

As people of faith and as Americans, we believe in what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called the 'Beloved Community.' Beloved Community works for the betterment of all Americans. It respects the value of every human being, celebrates diversity, and supports equity and inclusion. It stands with those who others would exclude. We seek to build this Beloved Community for the many races, faiths, cultures, and ways of life that together make up this great nation.

WE ALL BELONG CAMPAIGN
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