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Suggested Title: Speaking Out for Compassion: Transforming the Context of Hate in the United States

Resolution Number: 3422

General Church Budget Implications: None

Global Implications: No

3422. Resisting Hate, Fear, and Scapegoating; and Speaking Out for Compassion: Transforming the Context of Hate in the United States- Amend and Readopt

~~“The person who doesn't love doesn't know God, because God is love.... If anyone says, I love God, and hates a brother or sister who can be seen can't love God, who can't be seen.”~~

~~(1 John 4:8, 20)~~

~~WHEREAS, in the post-9/11 world, reports of hate crimes or acts such as the following have become part of the daily lives of people both in the United States and around the world:~~

~~So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets,~~

~~honesty cannot enter. Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.~~

~~The Lord looked and was displeased that there was no justice. God saw that there was no one,~~

~~God was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so God's own arm achieved salvation and~~

~~God's own righteousness sustained him.~~

—Isaiah 59:14-16 (NIV)

~~And therefore, put off falsehood and speak truthfully, for we are all members of one body.~~

—Ephesians 4:25

~~When Isaiah observed that “justice has stumbled in the streets” and “truth is nowhere to be~~

~~found,” he said “God was appalled.” At a time of rising vitriol, racism, hate, and violence in the~~

~~world born of deep economic crisis and global shifts, it is time for the church to speak out. If we~~

~~do not, God will be appalled. We feel compelled to raise a prophetic voice challenging the~~

~~climate of distrust, distortion of truth and fear, shifting the conversation to our common future.~~

~~In many places, the level of anger has crossed a line in terms of civility. Whatever the~~

disagreement about policy or program, this behavior is unacceptable. It represents a spiritual crisis that calls for us to respond by deepening our understanding of God's call and filling our own deep yearnings for spiritual wholeness, that can empower us to love and compassion without giving up our responsibility to speak out for justice. The consequences of this climate of fear and hostility has been an increase in the number of reported hate crimes, particularly in the post-9/11 world. Reports of hate crimes or acts such as the following have become part of the daily lives of people in the United States:

- A Muslim Arab-American woman receives a threat from a coworker ~~coworker~~ co-worker: “You and your kids will pay ~~...death~~”;
- a Catholic high school student is punched and kicked on a bus by a group of youth for looking “Chinese”;
- a teenage boy is beaten with a baseball bat because of his perceived sexuality;
- anti-Semitic graffiti is spray painted on a store selling kosher meat products;
- ~~four~~ Four men attack and kill one of twelve undocumented immigrants;
- a cross is burned on the lawn of a house for sale after being viewed by an African American family.

These acts ~~encourage social movements that promote~~ and are manifestations of bigotry based on ~~race, religion, gender, race,~~ race, sexual orientation, and national origin (~~white supremacists/nativists~~) ~~to appeal to racial and other fears.~~

If we look ~~only~~ at these acts as ~~the~~ acts of individuals or groups of individuals we will fail to recognize the ~~wide context of fear and hate that gives rise to these individual acts. That context has both historical roots and grounding in current economic and political realities. Demographic change and economic uncertainties contribute to a sense of insecurity and anxiety about the~~

future leading to old animosities and prejudices being revived and new ones. systemic context of injustice that give rise to such acts.

In addition to the realities of the post- 9/11 increase in hate and fear mongering, many parts of our nation are facing a deep economic crisis. More and more people in the United States are learning the harsh realities: job loss, reduction of work hours, bankruptcies, lack of affordable health care resource, resources, foreclosures, predatory lending, declining wages, budget cuts for education and critical social programs. In the United States, the overall unemployment rate in November 2014 was 5.8 percent but for Latinos and African Americans, the respective rates were 6.6 percent and 11.1 percent. We recognize that there is cause for anger among all economic and social groups. However, we are alarmed by the climate of hate in public discourse in the United States that has emerged in the wake of these difficult economic realities. We must challenge the misdirection of anger toward the most vulnerable for all are impacted by these crises.

As Christians we are called to be models of compassion. The United Methodist Church ~~Church~~ reaffirms Social Principles affirm,

“We affirm all persons as equally valuable in the sight of God.... We support the basic rights of all persons to equal access to housing, education, communication, employment, medical care, legal redress for grievances, and physical protection. We deplore acts of hate or violence against groups or persons based on race, color, national origin, ethnicity, age, gender, disability, status, economic condition, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religious affiliation” Social Principles, ¶162III).

“The strength of a political system depends upon the full and willing participation of

its historical commitment citizens. The church should continually exert a strong ethical influence upon the state, supporting policies and programs deemed to be just and opposing acts of hate, hate speech, policies and violence programs that are unjust” (Social Principles, ¶164V).

The Charter for Racial Justice states that all persons are equally valuable in both church the sight of God, that racism is a rejection of the teachings of Jesus Christ, that we must work toward a world in which each person’s value is respected and society nurtured.

We remember our roots in speaking out for justice. Methodist women organized against lynching in the 1930s. The church commits itself to redouble its efforts spoke out boldly during the 1960s in support of the Civil Rights Movement. In South Africa and the United States, United Methodists were strong in the opposition to apartheid. We spoke boldly for peace and the reunification of Korea. In the 1980s we called for an end to U.S. government funding of paramilitary groups in Central America. When the United States began bombing Afghanistan in 2003, we called for an end to the bombing as well as long term support for the United Nations and international human rights. We continue to speak out against hate crimes and work to transform the context of fear and hate that gives permission to these acts, naming and challenging the culture that perpetuates it in support of migrants and immigrants who are demonized and criminalized in many countries.

Be it resolved,

We do not want God to be appalled. We confess that ~~The~~ we have not always behaved well as a church. We have violated one another and acknowledge the need to reexamine our own behavior in following our impulse to first protect our own needs and our own security.

It is time to act boldly and with God's grace, truth will be found and we will know justice. We call for the United Methodist Church, with assistance from the appropriate — individuals, congregations, conferences, boards, and agencies, and local churches, implement the following recommendations clergy and laity—to:

Faith and Biblical Resources:

- ~~provide~~
- Develop multigenerational educational resources to build understanding of the systemic nature of racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of marginalization.
- Provide biblically-based resources for young people and adults that address the historic and systemic roots of hate that lead to hate speech and hate crimes; all the manifestations of hate in our society.
- ~~create resources to help United Methodists analyze the language of hate among groups that use religious language to justify hatred and bigotry;~~
- ~~work with ecumenical and interfaith groups to create worship resources, and develop community activities to unite religious groups on behalf of justice for all;~~

Educational Resources:

- ~~develop educational materials to build understanding~~
- Enter into dialogue and action, speaking out for compassion and against hate. A faithful dialogue requires the courage to speak up without misusing privilege and power. This will include:
 - Redefining compassion as the process of inviting and sustaining faith in full dialogue.
 - Acknowledging the wholeness of the human family means willingness to stay in community with those whom we disagree, by embracing both patience and humility.

- Commitment to a lifelong journey of the systemic, institutionalized culture of racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of marginalization; develop materials to explore and challenge expressions of hate, including: personal attitudes, scapegoating, individual violence, media distortions to public policy, and collective violence, including state violence; discipline.

• ~~educate United Methodists about trends of hate in the US and the world and how the church can prevent and respond to acts of hate;~~

Action/Organizing/Advocacy:

• ~~encourage United Methodists to report hate incidents to the police, and to organize support for victims of hate crimes;~~

- ~~encourage~~ Commitment to listen attentively, respectfully and never using dialogue as an excuse for talk and no action or to mask dishonesty.
- Encouraging United Methodists to end complicity with hate by speaking out when jokes, disparagements and stereotypes are based on ~~identity or status~~ difference.

Annual Conferences—Responding

- Creating opportunities to ~~Hate Crimes: annual conferences develop data bases of information of local~~ hear from excluded groups about the reality and state- impact of hate groups and explore the connections between anti-immigrant/refugee groups and white supremacist organizations in order to develop strategies for response for use by local churches; organize letter writing campaigns and denominational and ecumenical delegations to meet partner with state government officials to advocate for the passage, funding, and implementation of strong and comprehensive state hate crimes laws that extend civil rights protections to all individuals and groups; them to act for justice.

- ~~encourage~~ Encouraging law enforcement personnel to maintain records on hate crimes and to bring to justice the perpetrators of such violence and intimidation.

- We call upon *Annual Conferences—Transforming the Culture of Hate:*

~~strongly encourage local churches, annual conferences, general agencies, campus ministry units, and any other place where The United Methodist Church has a witness, church at all levels to create opportunities to hear from excluded groups about the reality and impact of hate and to partner with them to act~~ sacred spaces for justice; common prayer and community discussion as an invitation to reconciliation.

- ~~be active participants~~ To convene conversations in civic or religious organizations that ~~promote unity~~ family gatherings, churches, communities and diversity ~~the political arena~~ about current realities, fears and the need for faith-filled compassionate response;
- Work with ecumenical and interfaith partners to create workshop resources and develop community activities to unite religions in our work to end all manifestations ~~eradicate~~ acts of hate; ~~as well as working with diverse grassroots and national organizations;~~
- Engage Engage in efforts to enable communities to unearth the truth about past and present hate_ violence, to bring perpetrators (including state actors) to ~~trial,~~ justice, and to heal wounds and seek reconciliation based on justice and more equitable power relationships. ~~This effort is based on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and other efforts now linked through the Center for Transitional Justice;~~
- ~~work through local organizations and local schools to ensure their policies~~ Be active participants in civic or religious organizations that promote unity and diversity, and work

to eradicate acts of hate as well as work with diverse grassroots and national organizations.

- We call upon conferences, boards, and training programs adequately address various forms of discrimination and sexual harassment based on gender and perceived sexual identity; agencies to use United Nations and other resources for adults and children in efforts to build a our global culture of peace; create an annual conference task force church to develop share models and strategies for faithful dialogue and, to address actions of the media intentionally practice words and attitudes that use or condone hate speech, stereotypes, or racial profiling will help us find common ground.

- ~~The United Methodist Church calls on~~ We call on all annual conferences to
 - Report ~~report~~ on their work on undoing the culture of hate ~~and hate crimes~~ at their annual conference meeting; ~~to include~~
 - Include hate crimes in their annual conference report to the General Commission on Religion and Race; ~~and to work~~
 - Work with the General Board of Church and Society, the General Board of Global Ministries; and United Methodist Women on this concern.

ADOPTED 2008

RESOLUTION #3422, 2008 *BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS*

See Social Principles, ¶ 162A, H, J.

Date: 8/20/15

Signature of Petitioner:

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