

From the Faith Committee of RefuseFascism.org

An Urgent Message to all Faiths— The world cannot afford a fascist America. Why we must do whatever we can to stop it!

In 1937, Martin Niemöller, a German pastor and theologian who initially welcomed Hitler's 1933 appointment as Chancellor of the German Reich. However, after publicly renouncing the regime, he was arrested and imprisoned in German concentration camps. The powerful and poetic statement(below) expresses Niemöller's deep regret for not having acted sooner to take a decisive stand against the rise of fascism in Germany.

*First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a communist.
Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist.*

*Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak out for me.*

NOTE: Donald Trump and Mike Pence have clearly articulated a hateful and dangerous agenda that they plan to pursue after January 20—for example:

- Building a wall on the southern border with Mexico
- Mass deportations of undocumented migrants;
- Restricting the rights of women to reproductive health care, including abortion;
- Instituting a Muslim registry and threatening to stop all immigration from Muslim-majority countries;
- Backing out of the Paris Climate Treaty;
- Threatening the press;
- Implementing Stop and Frisk nationally;
- Re-starting the nuclear arms race.

To facilitate the accomplishment of this agenda, they are surrounding themselves with:

- White supremacists
- Climate-change deniers
- Anti-immigrant activists
- Anti-Muslim activists
- Radical opponents of organized labor, and
- Activists seeking to roll back the rights women and LGBTQ persons.

WHY WE MUST APPEAL TO ALL PEOPLE OF FAITH TO ACT NOW!

The human costs of a fascist regime in the United States will be incalculable. No-one will be safe if this agenda is allowed to move forward.

Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote these words in his *Letter from Birmingham Jail*:

“More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people.”

This is why we, as people of religious faith, must decide now where we are going to stand. Our diverse faiths do not call us to passivity. They call us to take a bold stand for justice and peace, to proclaim a clear “**NO!**” in the face of all that we recognize as evil, and to take risks to do what must be done on behalf of the good and the right. It is crucial that we take a stand early on, rather than waiting until fascism’s intentions are fully revealed and atrocities have already been committed. By the time power has been consolidated, it is too late. Those who might speak out are eliminated one by one until there is no one left to speak.

So, what can we do?

- We can encourage people to sign the *Call to Refuse to Accept a Fascist America* at www.refusefascism.org;
- We can rally our communities to join street protests on New Year’s Eve and then again during the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend, January 14-16;
- We can organize teach-ins;
- We can get the word out to others in our faith groups;
- We can volunteer our time and our skills to local organizing efforts in our own communities;
- We can join mass rallies on January 19 and 20 in Washington, DC, and in communities around our nation to let the world know that we will not accept a fascist America!

It’s important that we do more than merely register our distaste for Trump and all that he stands for. We need to rally the religious communities with which we work to take a strong stand and make a difference. Stand with us in the name of Humanity!

Signers:

Rev. Gregg L. Greer
Rev. Doris Johnson
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Rev. Frank Wulf