In Defense of Christian Faith and a Democratic Future  
On the Trump Presidency: From Members of the Princeton Seminary Faculty  
February 24, 2017  
(signers to this statement do not represent the Seminary or the faculty as a whole)

We, the undersigned, believe that because God is sovereign over all creation and because all human beings are embraced by God’s all encompassing grace, the god of Donald Trump’s “America first” nationalism is not the God revealed in our scriptures. Regardless of our specific political persuasions we agree that the attitudes fostered by this nationalism are inconsistent with Christian values of welcoming the stranger as if we were welcoming Christ, of seeking to distinguish truth from deception and conceit, and of believing that no institution or government can demand the kind of loyalty that belongs only to God.

We also believe that the policies and approach embraced by the Trump administration run counter to democratic values, as executive orders and members of the new administration’s cabinet often seek to demonize Islam, foster white supremacy, compromise the rule of law and intimidate judges, undermine the empowerment of women, ignore the destruction of the environment, promote homophobia, unleash unfounded fears of crime that worsen the “law and order” abuses of police and security forces. We reject the pervasive aim of placing the monetary gain of wealthy classes over the welfare of its citizenry by undermining education, quality employment, and health care. We believe that Christian faith and US democracy are not the same thing; hence, we stand against the notion of a “Christian nation.” But as Christians who are also citizens or residents of the US, we stand against the attitudes and policies that are being fostered in this present political climate.

As we look at the role of the US in promoting war and repression abroad and division among its own peoples at home, however, we confess our own complicity in the sinful entanglements that have created this political and social crisis. Not all of us have taken a firm and vocal enough stance against what Martin Luther King, Jr. called the “giant triplets” of violence in the United States: “racism, extreme materialism, and militarism.” We have often embraced academic elitism that overlooks the needs of the unemployed or the value of jobs that do not require higher education. We recognize a legacy of failure that marks past presidential administrations, and so harbor no nostalgia for the politics of the past. But we do not believe that Trump is a remedy for that legacy of failure. In Trump’s values and policies we see no public witness consistent with the Gospel or with the values of those who are believers in Jesus Christ and members of Christ’s church.

We not only reject Trump’s values and policies, we also renew our commitment to a future where both the church and the academy will foster attitudes and actions so that human beings and the whole of creation can thrive. We join our hearts, our minds, our voices, and our actions with those of religious believers—Christians, Jews, Muslims, and people of all faiths, as well as with secular people of good conscience, to resist the present destructive politics in our country and to seek reversal of their destructive consequences here and around the world.
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