

Waking up with Donald Trump

As we wake up to the election results, and the news that a large chunk of the voting block were white Christians, we see that the soul of our nation is hollowed and charred.

by [Carol Howard Merritt](#)

November 9, 2016

From all the forecasts, we thought that the far right of our country would be doing a lot of soul-searching this morning. They would have to ask, “How did we lose our way? How can we move forward?” We assumed that the moral arc of the universe would bend just a bit more so that we might have our first woman president.

We were wrong.

It was a long, contentious race. Trump responded to immigrants who risked their lives for a better future by calling them thugs and rapists. Trump replied to “black lives matter” sorrows with law and order threats. Trump countered our free press with legal threats. Trump answered the greatest aspirations of women by saying he would grab them by their p---.

Before this election, there was an idea that we didn’t really need robust liberal Christian thought. Progressive Christians had won the culture war. Our presence was blurry. It could not be seen in the sharp relief, like the religious Right, but that was because of our success. Our shadowy existence had permeated the media, education, and institutions so thoroughly that we didn’t have to have such contrast. As the news media looked at their contact list for “the other side” of an issue, they chose Franklin Graham and Ralph Reed over... who would they even call? It didn’t really matter, because we didn’t have “another side.”

Social justice Christians had been marching for Civil Rights, providing sanctuary to immigrants, working for marriage equality, and fighting for women's health and opportunities for so many years—where was the news in that? If there was news, progressive people of faith didn't have the slightest understanding of how to make the news interesting enough to cover. Our faith seemed so in sync with the established norms of our country, that we didn't need think tanks that took religion seriously as they worked on policy.

Christians who worked on issues of social justice had a very difficult time raising money. Religious donors didn't want to support liberals. Liberal donors didn't want to support religion. Liberal pastors asked whether we should talk about politics at all, instead of working out what we should be saying.

Yet, as we wake up to President Elect Donald Trump, and the news that a large chunk of the voting block were the white Christians in our country, we see that the soul of our nation is hollowed and charred. Liberals do need faithful voices and progressive Christians need to be better equipped and engaged.

How did we lose our way? What is the way forward?

We have to confess. We look at the religious Right and wonder how they could support such a racist, misogynist, who goes against every family value that they said they upheld. And yet, we also conceded much when it came to our faithful commitments. We turned our backs on peacemaking, ignored commitment to close Guantanamo, and have not called out on behalf of the children who have been killed by drones. We allowed the destruction of the environment. We have to been deaf to the cries of the poor. We watched as liberal Christians who supported Civil Rights in the sixties mocked the Occupy Movement. We have not confessed our white supremacy and all the ways that we perpetuate the new Jim Crow. We have allowed women to be ruthlessly bullied when they cried out for women's health.

I don't mean to pile on, heaping guilt upon our sorrow. It's just that confession is good for the soul, and when we have confessed, we can continue to move forward in our movement for justice, peace, and love.

It's time for [faithful resistance](#) (as Rick Ufford-Chase would say). It's time for us to stand in stark relief against a culture that scapegoats people of color, mocks people with disabilities, participates in Islamophobia, relishes in Antisemitism, gaslights women, and ignores the hungry. We can begin to commit our intelligence,

imaginations, resources, and love to making a way forward, through diligent prayer, robust thought, and agitating action.

Most of all, we need to get back to the business of loving our neighbors. We have obsessed over our institutions and investments long enough. And now that our markets are in a free fall, we can remind ourselves once again that Wall Street will not save us.

Instead we will need to proclaim that our common humanity is sturdier than any wall. Our commitment to the earth is stronger than our love for the petroleum we can derive from it. And the dream of God, which sees every person as beloved, keeps us awake, proclaiming that there is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, gay or straight, rich or poor. We are all one in God's love.

Beloved friends, we are tired. We are mourning. But let us continue our work, for we have much to do as we continue to define our stark contrast to the empire in which we woke up.