



Resist

Amy Johnson

**UCC Our Whole Lives Coordinator and
Commissioned Minister for Sexuality Education**

As I sat down to write this piece, the notification came in that the president declared a national emergency in order to access close to \$8 billion in funds to build a wall at our southern border.

Meanwhile, in my closet hangs my “Resist” shirt. It is short-sleeved, V-necked and black with white lettering. The letters of the word “RESIST” are made up of other words, giving the visual message to resist racism, resist sexism, resist violence, bullying, white supremacy, xenophobia, evil.... Resist, in other words, the things that separate us. Resist false borders between each other and God.

Is there a national emergency? Most certainly. There is a national emergency of divisiveness and willful ignorance that has too many of us believing platitudes like “we are committed to ending HIV by 2030” with no specific plan or funding to save those lives, and while existing civil rights are being torn away from those of us who are most affected by HIV: LGBTQ people. People of color. People of limited economic means. People without health care.

This willful ignorance incorrectly insists that everyone has a choice about being sexually active, discounting the ever-rising numbers of sexual harassment and assault, ignoring the misuse of power, and systematically dissecting a person’s options to prevent unintended pregnancy and their right to choose whether to terminate such a pregnancy. It inflames false righteousness with confrontational language, judgment, shame, and stigma.

This is an infectious ignorance that fuels arguments about which bathrooms people are entitled to use, what options we have for official identification, and ever-shrinking spaces where it is safe to reveal all of who we are.

This national emergency pits us against them, restricting funding for workers in agencies who give lifesaving information about sexual and reproductive health not only in the United States, but also in places in our world where people are literally dying to learn how to be safely in relationship with each other.

Make no mistake. There is a national emergency. One in which we are being called to resist the temptation to believe that a wall will solve anything—when in reality, we need to renew our minds and spirits and remember who and whose we are. Under “RESIST” on my shirt is a scriptural reference: Romans 12:2. The NRSV version of this verse says, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

No wall will ever be good and acceptable and perfect in the eyes of the God I know. The God I know tears down walls of ignorance, pride, greed, and power and calls us into community with each other, to build bridges to peace and faith and wholeness. When we choose to resist messages and practices of separation, we join in the deep spiritual practice of resistance for peace. Together, we can—and must—resist.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amy Johnson is the Our Whole Lives Coordinator and Commissioned Minister for Sexuality Education for the United Church of Christ.

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