

Why I've Resisted Trump for Four Insufferable White House Years



Social Entrepreneur, Dr. Warner Woodworth

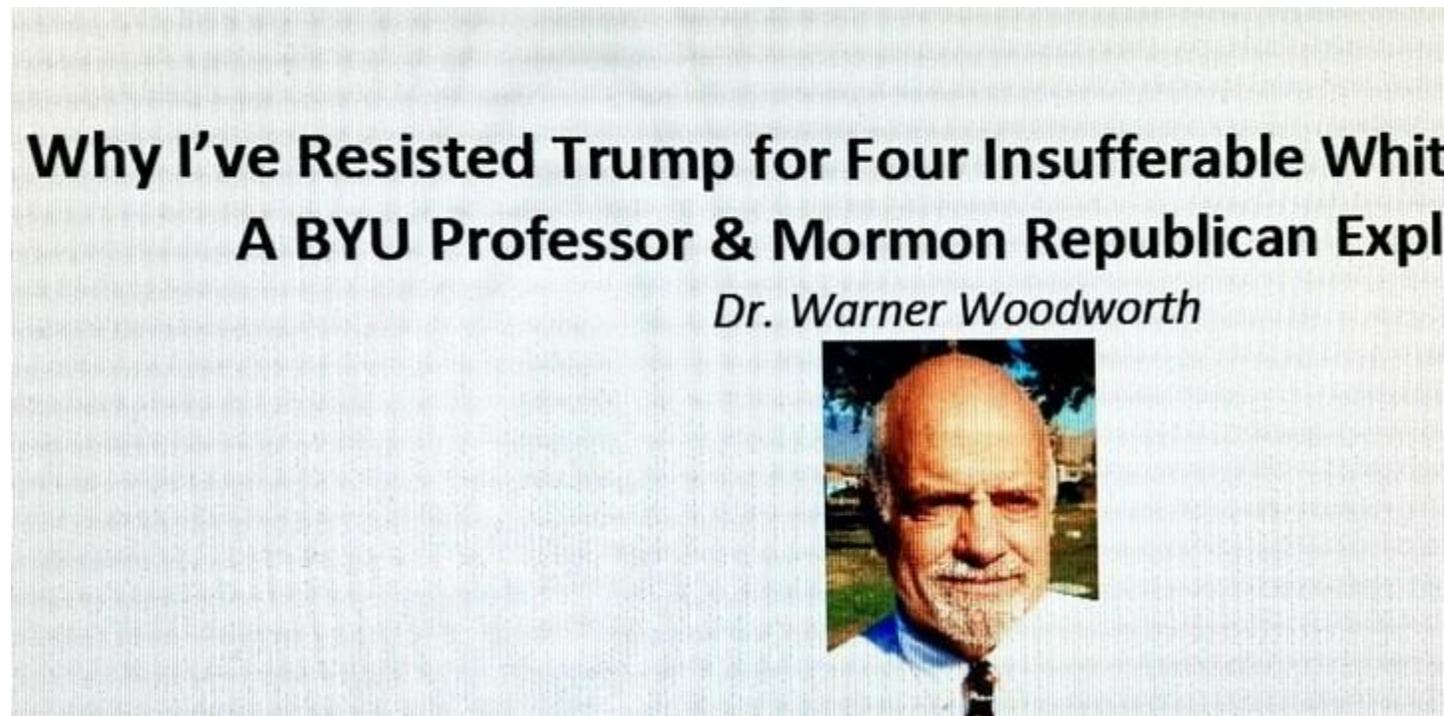
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Why I've Resisted Trump for Four Insufferable White House Years: A BYU Professor & Mormon Republican Explanation

Dr. Warner Woodworth

I have criticized and fought against Donald Trump for a long time, but I became increasingly resistant to all his evildoing since he was “installed” in the White House following the 2016 tragic presidential election. Since then, many of my posts against him on Facebook, LinkedIn groups, plus 8,000-10,000 BFFs on a half dozen other social media groups have generated discomfort for many of folks. I take it in stride, learn, laugh, and debate with them. Whether discussing managerial issues, global strategies, poverty, healthcare, consulting, politics, it's always fun, at least to a degree.

I seem to draw some people's ire, whether I know them or not. Occasionally, I get messaged or an email/text asking me to shut up, which I reject. On the other hand, I get questions as to how I handle my many critics. Here below are a couple of my responses.

First, thanks to my mother, Mormon Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon or “LDS”) leaders, professors when in grad school, and executives I've consulted within corporate America over the years, I learned early on to “tell it like it is.” My professional field of Organizational Behavior (Ph.D. University of Michigan) emphasizes openness, honesty, and the need for transparency in working and communicating with others. In my LDS Church callings as congregational leader, I was always set apart or blessed and encouraged to be a different voice, to take honest stands, and not acquiesce to authorities higher up. Doing so has allowed me to have amazing experiences with church leaders from my local congregation to top global officials and be able to propose or influence a number of programs that were first rejected, but later approved and implemented as church-wide policies.

In business, my consulting and training efforts were pretty successful in confronting and working with lots of CEOs across the U.S. as well as in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. I made way too much money, but it allowed me to give away millions through the years to those who suffer. As I moved full-time into fighting for the global poor, I learned how to be open and honest with founders, NGO managers, big donors, and lots of indigenous leaders in hundreds of villages globally. From my wife Kaye and other additional mentors, being open and upfront became a lifelong journey for me.

I hope this background helps explain my efforts to resist Donald Trump beginning when he started planning to run for the presidency in 2012 or so. Having studied his criminal tendencies for decades previously, and my giving numerous lectures critical of the guy, I knew full well he could bring down our country in his obsession for power and money. So I collaborated with psychologists to remove him per the 25th Amendment that has a way to shut down a mentally dangerous president and replace him with the VP, in Mike Pence's case, a less insane replacement. I also joined a huge group of attorneys who, as they saw Trump's first lawbreaking efforts, became alarmed about preserving the U.S. Constitution. But in each case, we couldn't get enough ethical political leaders who believed in U.S. laws to succeed in protecting the United States. Even the Senate impeachment trial a few months ago went bust as the GOP majority succumbed to Trump's control freak abilities.

You occasionally hear the Republicans' weird rhetoric that Democrats were against Trump since Day 1. No. They weren't initially, but we all remember the GOP leaders plotting to make Barack Obama a "one-term president," which they conspired and sought to do for 4 years. Of course, he was beloved by many people and served eight years. But the guy who truly should never have been allowed to stain the oval office has done four years of damage worse than anyone could have imagined.

The fact is that as Trump became more like other outlaws in his first months, many patriotic people spoke out against him, including me. We naively hoped he'd repent, obey the law, and help our country as a servant leader. So hopeful. So wrong. The worse he became in expanding unethical behavior, family nepotism, and greed, the more people were concerned. Over time, I raised my voice more frequently, and a few people I never met asked why I hated the Orange-faced guy. My reply was always pretty simple: No, I don't hate him, but I despise his ongoing shredding of U.S. law, his mafia practices, his rapidly growing lies (some 7,000 documented lies in his first year.), etc.

But speaking out didn't reduce or even impact Trump's corruption. He hired so many incompetents to his administration, and if any of them pointed out his violations they were fired. Obedience and control were the guy's presidential values, not justice, truth, or good policies, whether at home or abroad. Because of his threats to democracy and fears, I and other outspoken people spoke out ever more vocally. During that era, I recalled my promises to people who'd been subjected to Hitler's Nazi regime. I met and heard their experiences when I was doing research in Germany and France in wanting to understand the rise of the Third Reich. I had heard stories from some who fled their homeland to southern Brazil where I lived for four years, and their experiences were shocking to me. As a youth, I listened to older

members of my Mormon congregation in Salt Lake City who, when I'd enquire, would tell of the horrific things they saw and participated in during WW II in Europe.

In my 40 years as a management professor, I've given numerous class lectures on parallels between corporate America and the Nazi war machine. The presentations would emphasize so many similarities in terms of driving for efficiency, profit above all, workers merely cogs in the organizational machine, dehumanizing of minorities and women.

Gradually, as I saw Trump increasingly grinding down our values, attacking those who were different, screaming just like Hitler's massive rants at rallies in Germany, it all became more troubling. There were additional parallels I saw in comparing Trump with Mussolini, Stalin, Franco, Pinochet, and other dictators, and I worried increasingly that he was hoping to establish his own empire. Desecrating what I thought was my Republican Party and turning it into the Trump cult was shocking to many of my conservative friends. It was the same in Congress as we witnessed GOP cowards not speak out, thereby tacitly accepting the decline of a two-party system.

So I spoke further against these evils as they grew more and more ugly. While most neighbors, friends, and former students sat idly by, I became more vociferous. Many were ever more silent, but I became more vocal. I accompanied some 500 religious leaders marching along the border between San Diego and Mexico to protest the thousands of family separations. We prayed for God's mercy on the kids put in cages, spoke against violations of immigration law, and shed tears over the deaths of some refugees trying to enter the once "Land of the Free & Home of the Brave." I became even more critical publicly.

I've been asked whether I was or am afraid. The answer is always not really. Hate mail, phone threats, rocks breaking my big plate glass front windows, all were unappreciated. Thankfully, I had FBI and local police support and carry out investigations. But I've always known cowards to hate the truth. When one speaks their conscience, bravery grows. I resented the mandate I felt to critique the evil growing in DC. But I also felt a responsibility, like any good citizen with a conscience.

Then as the Trump Virus was entering our society last February, "Dr. Trump" hid the truth. I've surmised he did so thinking that many would die and he would be re-elected if he stayed silent. I became increasingly frustrated. The facts of this new pandemic promised massive suffering and death. But he didn't care & FOX host crazies exacerbated the problem. As always, it was Trump's Wealth, his Power, his Manipulations on which he focused. Only those 3 things.

A few months ago, my efforts to counter the evil White House were accelerated as I recalled long ago promises to the old survivors of Hitler I'd met mentioned above, as well as my promise to refugee women and kids of the Central American caravans suffering from Trump and his fellow Nazi, Stephen Miller, the godfather of refugee oppression for four tragic years. My promise to speak truth to power grew. Be outspoken. Don't ignore evil or look the other way as so many do. I was inspired by the values of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr, J.F. Kennedy, Gandhi, and the Old Testament prophets, Isaiah, Amos, & Jeremiah. All were outspoken. All were rejected. All valued the truth.

A number of "friends" have complained that I'm too critical. I should mellow out. That Christians don't talk the way I've been doing. It's curious. Having lived, loved and served Jesus' principles and His Church throughout my life, I can't figure out what such folks mean. Having studied Mormonism and been a full-time LDS Seminary teacher and Institute of Religion director for decades, I wondered how much some of these "believers" have actually understood the gospel.

With decades of being a church leader in many congregations, I often discuss with others how my religious neighbors and church members can remain silent in the midst of Trump's atrocities. Many people close to me, as well as relatives, university colleagues, and former students voted for Trump in 2016. Surprisingly, they did it again in 2020 when they knew how absolutely awful he really is.

Lots of my associates from other spiritual traditions, or none at all, have asked me about this over the last 4-5 years. That is, how Utah Christians, especially adherents of the Mormon faith tradition, could support the guy in the White House. I've simply explained that many are victims of the "traditions of their fathers." Others are addicted to only watching false media stories and they never check for alternative facts. It's too much work. Increasingly, I see that some acquaintances and relatives are caught up in QAnon and other crazy conspiracies. Others I know well are simple adherents to being quiet and not "making waves."

In sum, as for me, here's my take about my life: Speak the truth. Never stay silent in times of oppression. I have never allowed other people to dictate the march of my own drum. I'm like many people in that I want friendship, love, and social relationships. But one shouldn't pay attention to other's complaints. I am not planning to let the world drive my views or behaviors. I think that's bad for one's conscience.

Do think I've convinced many people to join my years of struggle to counter Trumpism and help achieve change? Probably not many. But I still speak my conscience. It's called "bearing

witness.” I learned this term by attending Quaker “meetings of Friends” as they call it, community fellowshiping in Utah, Boston, and Philadelphia, where the early Quaker faith was born centuries ago. My calling, as with any religious believer, is to speak out and speak up. To bear witness at all times. I do so every day.

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Social Entrepreneur **AUTHOR**

Dec 29, 2020 at 02:19:10 PM

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nancyjones

Dec 29, 2020 at 02:46:29 PM

I'm glad you've resisted Trump. I'm glad your religion gave you a good moral grounding. I find it interesting that you identify as both Mormon and Christian. There are others who identify as Christian who would reject that you can be both. I'm sure you know that. I'm sorry

that any religion thinks it has the upper hand on morality. I was raised in a Christian church, and I'm grateful for the moral grounding it gave me, but I ultimately had to leave it and all organized religion because they all seem to ultimately lead to loyalty to the tribe adherence to labels taking precedence over that which is true, good, and beautiful. I think Trump brought this aspect out in the ugliest and most destructive way.

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luvnserv

Dec 29, 2020 at 03:28:59 PM

Thank you for being true to TRUTH, in the face of incredible pushback, especially from those who had similar backgrounds to you, who then did the unthinkable, voted for Trump twice! It boggles the mind, that people refuse to see a despicable thug who cares for no one but himself for who he is. Its not like he's hiding who he is. Why are they not seeing? Makes no sense. But then neither did Hitler and his grip over large swaths of the German population. They simply turned a blind eye and deaf ear and pretended to themselves that he was exactly what they needed. None can say to you, you knew and yet you kept quiet. You spoke out at ever chance and that is where the satisfaction comes. I applaud your courage and perseverance, with no need for recognition for your stand. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

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merchantbard

Dec 29, 2020 at 03:40:47 PM

In my 40 years as a management professor, I've given numerous class lectures on parallels between corporate America and the Nazi war machine.

I believe it was Mussolini who stated (and I'm paraphrasing): "fascism, properly understood, should be called 'corporatism' as it melds state and industry into one, unified force". Hard to argue with him there.

As for your friends who counseled "mellowing out", precisely what kind of follower of that carpenter-turned-rabbi from Nazareth could stand silent before the atrocity practiced these last

four years? It would be every bit as obscene as everything the career failure from Queens, NY has summoned forth to remain silent.

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MargaretPOA

Dec 29, 2020 at 04:13:43 PM

You wanna know what? No kudos for behaving like a rational, sane human being because that is not so much praise worthy as it is expected social and civil behavior. You're a Republican and a Mormon so there are a whole lot of things that you do stand for and support that are directly antithetical to my life and my very existence as a person. Just because you haven't supported a lying, self aggrandizing, corrupt, racist, misogynist bigot is not a good reason for a "dig me" post. You wouldn't have had any problem with McConnell's obstruction and packing courts with conservative ideologues had the current President been named Romney or Bush or Rubio. You wouldn't have had any problem with anti trans bathroom bills or policies that allow LGBTQ discrimination had the President been named Pence or Kasich. You would have been totally fine with treating BLM like terrorists if the President's name was Haley or Cruz. In short, you, like Bill Kristol and George Will seem to have zero issues with 99% of Republican policies. Policies that are cruel and punitive toward the poor and toward minorities. Nope, your problem is that Trump has no mouth and impulse control. My evidence for that criticism of you lies in your admission that you are both a Mormon and a Republican, whose publicly stated positions and tenets are ideologically narrow and extremely harsh toward atheists, women, LGBTQ people, ethnic minorities and the poor. You don't get to claim moral superiority while actively participating in those organizations. It doesn't matter if you say you've opposed those policies because you are still a member in good standing.

You might gain some fans around here but I'm not going to be one of them because it's one thing to oppose open cruelty and another to oppose that cruelty when it comes wrapped in a smile and politically correct platitudes. Save it for Oprah. Rejecting Trumpism is great but rejecting the conservative teachings of cruelty and privilege would mean more to me and honestly, the Republican Party is the illness, Trump is just a symptom. You can't excise that single tumor and ignore the metastasis.

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SGMRET

Dec 29, 2020 at 04:41:29 PM

You are right: to remain silent is to agree. Nice article.

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rye777

Dec 30, 2020 at 03:40:12 PM

Trump won Utah by over twenty points again and this doesn't happen without the Church explicitly telling its members to vote Republican. You would think that child separation would offend their family values, not to mention a whole slew of other transgressions by Trump. I'm glad the author feels he is speaking truth, but don't let this article mislead you into thinking that as a group Mormons have held a high moral ground. Mike Lee is an extremely popular toady to Trump. The exception is Mitt Romney.

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