First Amendment—US Constitution
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The **UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech** defines hate speech as… "any kind of communication in speech, writing or behavior, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, color, descent, gender or other identity factor."

American Library Association (ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/hate)
There is no legal definition of "hate speech" under U.S. law, just as there is no legal definition for evil ideas, rudeness, unpatriotic speech, or any other kind of speech that people might condemn. Generally, however, hate speech is any form of expression through which speakers intend to vilify, humiliate, or incite hatred against a group or a class of persons on the basis of race, religion, skin color sexual identity, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, or national origin.

In the United States, hate speech is protected by the First Amendment. Courts extend this protection on the grounds that the First Amendment requires the government to strictly protect robust debate on matters of public concern even when such debate devolves into distasteful, offensive, or hateful speech that causes others to feel grief, anger, or fear. (The Supreme Court's decision in Snyder v. Phelps provides an example of this legal reasoning.) Under current First Amendment jurisprudence, hate speech can only be criminalized when it directly incites imminent criminal activity or consists of specific threats of violence targeted against a person or group.

How should Christians respond when being pressured or persecuted?

HOLY SPEECH

1 Peter 3:9-17 "9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. 11 They must

turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. [12] For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." [13] Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? [14] But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." [15] But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, [16] keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. [17] For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil." (NIV)

1. BLESS instead of insult.

1 Peter 3:9 "Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing."

Ephesians 4:29 "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful in building others up according to their needs." (NIV)

Luke 6:27-28 "[27] But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, [28] bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." (NIV)

Matthew 5:10-12 "[10] Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [11] Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. [12] Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before." (NIV)

2. TRUTH instead of deceit.

1 Peter 3:10 "For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech." (NIV)

John 1:14 "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling with us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (NIV)

3. PEACE instead of conflict.

1 Peter 3:11 "They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it." (NIV)

Romans 12:17-18 "17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." (NIV)

4. COURAGE instead of fear.

1 Peter 3:13-15a "13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." 15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord …". (NIV)

Isaiah 8:12-13 "12 Do not call conspiracy everything this people calls a conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. 13 The Lord Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, He is the one you are to fear, He is the one you are to dread." (NIV)

Acts 4:13 "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus." (NIV)

5. GENTLE instead of rude.

1 Peter 3:15b "… Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect …".

Colossians 4:5-6 "5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most if every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." (NIV)

6. INTEGRITY instead of hypocrisy.

1 Peter 3:16 "… keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."

Titus 2:7-8 "7 In everything set them as example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness 8 and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us." (NIV)

BOTTOM LINE

1 Peter 3:10 "For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech." (NIV)

James 3:2 "We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check." (NIV)

Proverbs 12:18 "The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." (NIV)