



**The Salvation Army  
Racial Justice Summit Event  
October 26-27, 2020**

**USA Central Territory**

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**Breakout Session I**

Gospel Informed Activism and Advocacy

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Both the scriptures and church history record people who protest injustice based on the principles of God's truth and justice. Often against great and dangerous forces these individuals initiate significant cultural change for good. This includes champions in our own Salvation Army.

What is principled protest? What great injustices disturb you today? What might God be calling you to counter? This breakout session will explore these questions, and more.

## **International Positional Statement Use of Power**

The Salvation Army strongly opposes any use of power that is oppressive, cruel or corrupt, or that denies human rights.

In the use of power, we all bear a responsibility to act for the benefit of those in need and to confront the abuse of power.

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### **Introduction**

From beginning to end scripture records people who protest injustice based on the principle of God's truth and justice.

Often against great and dangerous forces these individuals initiate significant cultural change for good.

What are the great injustices that disturb you today?

## Context



A repeated theme throughout two thousand years of church history is the record of individuals, sects, religious communities and fully-fledged movements

protesting a wide range of inequalities and injustices.

Some protests have changed the very course of human history:

- Early Christian communities endured persecution for refusing to acknowledge Caesar as lord
- Protestantism derives its very name from the principled protest of Martin Luther against religious corruption and abuse of power
- William Wilberforce, British member of Parliament, steadfastly petitioned and lobbied for legislation that made the slave trade illegal

Many protests, however, are small and unnoticed:

- the parent confronting cable TV providers for the easy access to sexually explicit content
- the youth worker protesting the inhuman plight of detained asylum seekers
- the white priest marching with black Americans for the right to vote
- the student corresponding with a corporate head over the gender pay gap



Small or large, each protest speaks truth to power.

We can say that the very fabric of the Christian faith is to face and counter powerful forces of injustice.

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## Discuss

- What injustices stir you to resist?
  - When have you spoken truth to power?
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## Scripture

The Old Testament prophets model confronting corruption and injustice. Here are just a few examples:

### Jeremiah

‘This is what the LORD says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed.’ (Jeremiah 22:3)



### Ezekiel

‘The people of the land practice extortion and commit robbery; they oppress the poor and needy and mistreat the alien, denying them justice.’ (Ezekiel 22:29)

### Isaiah

‘Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land.’ (Isaiah 5:8)

## **Proverbs**

‘Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.’ (31:8-9)

Other giants in the Biblical story embody protest on principle:

## **Moses** – Confronts ethnic injustice

‘The cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.’ (Exodus 3:9-10)



## **Daniel** – Protests religious coercion

‘Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.’ (Daniel 6:10)



‘As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus *resolutely* set out for Jerusalem.’ (Luke 9:51)

### **Governing Authorities**

No biblical study on this matter is complete without the oft-quoted passage from Romans 13:

‘Everyone must submit themselves to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, those who rebel against the authority are rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.’  
(Romans 13:1-2)

While literal application of these verses can be (and have been) abusively used to justify all manner of appalling injustice, here is a word of caution for us.

**Not all authorities or actions that we may disagree with are unjust. We must carefully evaluate before confronting or protesting.**



**Discuss:**

- 'We must obey God rather than men.' (Acts 5:29 NIV)
  - Principled protest comes at personal cost.
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