



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

**USA Central Territory**

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**Breakout Session II**

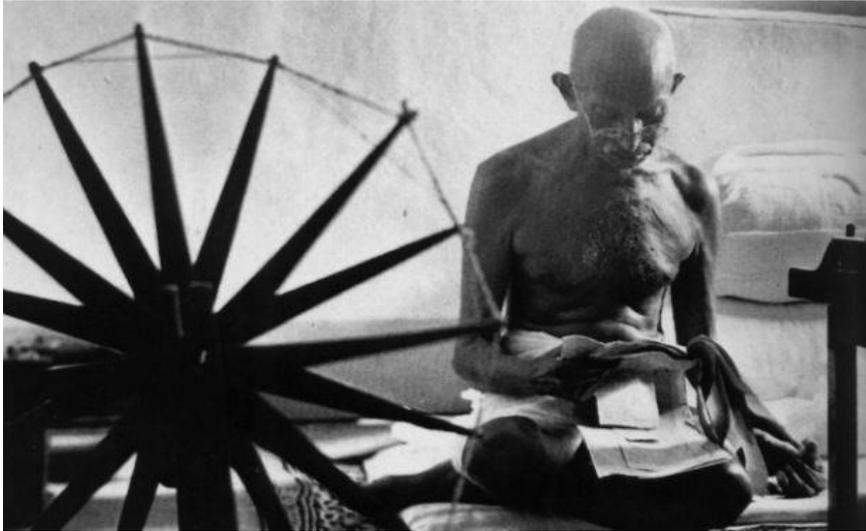
Gospel Informed Activism and Advocacy

Colonel Richard Munn, International Social Justice Commission

**Principled Protest Champions**

**Henry David Thoreau** (1817-1862) wrote the influential essay *Civil Disobedience* following a night in jail for refusing to pay his poll tax. He created a key principle:

‘There is a higher law than the civil one, and the higher law must be followed even if a penalty ensues.’



**Mahatma Gandhi** (1869-1948) brought the ideas of Thoreau onto the international stage with his pivotal role in leading India to political

independence. He confronted injustice without using violence and made perpetrators face up to their exploitations.

Various nonviolent methods can be implemented to confront or persuade



- boycotts
- demonstrations
- fasts
- letters
- petitions
- non-cooperation
- picketing
- sit-ins
- kneeling
- strikes

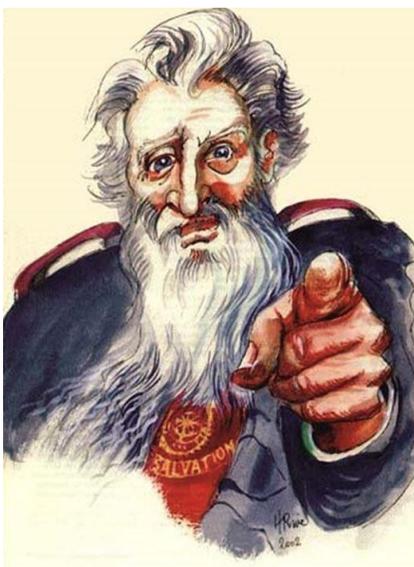
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## Discuss

- Which kind of principled protest appeals to you?
  - Which ways have proven effective in your observation?
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**Martin Luther King** (1929-1968) built on the legacy of Gandhi by bringing principled protest into the civil rights movement of the USA in the 1950's-60's. The power of the movement brought the Judeo-Christian ethic into the heart of national constitutional discourse.

The era stands as the epitome of principled protest. It changed the conscience and character of a nation.



**The Salvation Army** is the direct result of principled protest. William and Catherine Booth believed God was calling them to serve as evangelists to the outcast. Methodist leaders wanted them in pastoral leadership. At the denominational conference, William publicly defied the appointment and left, urged on by the vocal support of Catherine.

Principled protest with a vision is a powerful force.

**John Woolman** – a Quaker – dedicated his life to eliminating slavery. He did so by gentle persuasion for over 20 years. He asked questions and visited Quaker communities along the US East Coast. One century before the Civil War not one Quaker owned a slave.

‘An organization and the world can be changed from the bottom up. One person can make a difference.’

Robert Quinn, *Deep Change: Discovering The Leader Within*

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### **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

The Salvation Army has an *apolitical* stance, remaining neutral in political battles. This was in place during the racist apartheid regime in South Africa.

In 1997 The Salvation Army in South Africa participated in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission headed by Bishop Desmond Tutu, and publicly apologized for past injustices against black citizens, and its ‘sin of silence.’



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**Discuss:**

- Silence is equal to complicity.
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## **CONCLUSION:**

Principled protest is a vital component in national, institutional, cultural, and religious transformation.

Two truths stand above many others:

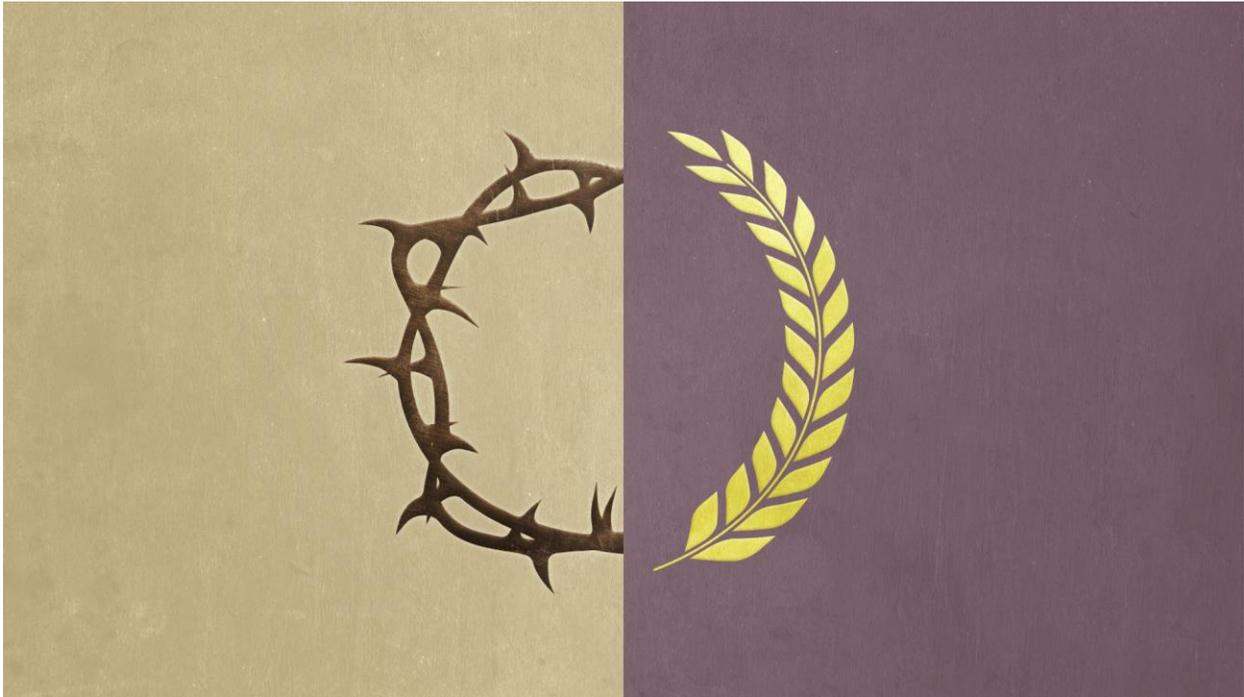
1. Principled protest is necessary when a structural power either commits injustice or remains silent in the presence of injustice. It appears the church is guiltier of the latter – the sin of omission.
2. Principled protest is part of the very fabric of Christianity. It must be exercised.

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We should not be naive: there is a cost to principled protest.

Here are three summary realities:

- Injustices exist in many places.
- We have to decide which ones God is calling us to stand against.
- We have to decide if we are willing to face the consequences.

**To Discuss:**

1. How is not protesting an injustice similar to endorsement?
2. What are some examples where performing the right action can cause division?
3. When is 'more respectable' dialogue or debate an unacceptable alternative to protest? Why?
4. What injustices are you committed to counter, for a lifetime if necessary?

## Resources

*Civil Disobedience* – Henry David Thoreau, 1849

*Gandhi: Portrayal of a Friend* – E. Stanley Jones, 1948

*Letter from a Birmingham Jail* – Martin Luther King, 1963

*To Be Like Jesus* – Dean Pallant, 2019, Chapter 8

Amnesty International - [www.amnesty.org/en/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights -

[www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/](http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/)

Salvation Army International Positional Statement – Use of Power