



*Peace*

# *"Pilgrimage to Nonviolence"*

**Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Chicago, IL, April 13, 1960**

Ten years ago I was just entering my senior year in theological seminary. Like most theological students I was engaged in the exciting job of studying various theological theories. Having been raised in a rather strict fundamentalist tradition, I was occasionally shocked as my intellectual journey carried me through new and sometimes complex doctrinal lands. But despite the shock the pilgrimage was always stimulating, and it gave me a new appreciation for objective appraisal and critical analysis. My early theological training did the same for me as the reading of [David] Hume did for [Immanuel] Kant: it knocked me out of my dogmatic slumber.

At this stage of my development I was a thoroughgoing liberal. Liberalism provided me with an intellectual satisfaction that I could never find in fundamentalism. I became so enamored of the insights of liberalism that I almost fell into the trap of accepting uncritically everything that came under its name. I was absolutely convinced of the natural goodness of man and the natural power of human reason.

The basic change in my thinking came when I began to question some of the theories that had been associated with so-called liberal theology. Of course there is one phase of liberalism that I hope to cherish always: its devotion to the search for truth, its insistence on an open and analytical mind, its refusal to abandon the best light of reason.<sup>2</sup> Liberalism's contribution to the philological-historical criticism of biblical literature has been of immeasurable value and should be defended with religious and scientific passion.

It was mainly the liberal doctrine of man that I began to question. The more I observed the tragedies of history and man's shameful inclination to choose the low road, the more I came to see the depths and strength of sin. My reading of the works of Reinhold Niebuhr made me aware of the complexity of human motives and the reality of sin on every level of man's existence.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, I came to recognize the complexity of man's social involvement and the glaring reality of collective evil.<sup>4</sup> I came to feel that liberalism had been all too sentimental concerning human nature and that it leaned toward a false idealism.

I also came to see that liberalism's superficial optimism concerning human nature caused it to overlook the fact that reason is darkened by sin.<sup>5</sup> The more I thought about human nature the more I saw how our tragic inclination for sin causes us to use our minds to rationalize our actions. Liberalism failed to see that reason by itself is little more than an instrument to justify man's defensive ways of thinking. Reason, devoid of the purifying power of faith, can never free itself from distortions and rationalizations.

In spite of the fact that I had to reject some aspects of liberalism, I never came to an all-out acceptance of neo-orthodoxy. While I saw neo-orthodoxy as a helpful corrective for a liberalism that had become all too sentimental, I never felt that it provided an adequate answer to the basic questions. If liberalism was too optimistic concerning human nature, neo-orthodoxy was too pessimistic. Not only on the question of man but also on other vital issues neo-orthodoxy went too far in its revolt.<sup>6</sup> In its attempt to preserve the transcendence of God, which had been neglected by liberalism's overstress of his immanence, neo-orthodoxy went to the extreme of stressing a God who was hidden, unknown and "wholly other." In its revolt against liberalism's overemphasis on the power of reason, neo-orthodoxy fell into a mood of antinationalism and semi fundamentalism, stressing a narrow, uncritical Biblicism. This approach, I felt, was inadequate both for the church and for personal life.

So although liberalism left me unsatisfied on the question of the nature of man, I found no refuge in neo-orthodoxy. I am now convinced that the truth about man is found neither in liberalism nor in neo-orthodoxy. Each represents a partial truth. A large segment of Protestant liberalism defined man only in terms of his essential nature, his capacity for good. Neo-orthodoxy tended to define man only in terms of his existential nature, his capacity for evil. An adequate understanding of man is found neither in the thesis of liberalism nor in the antithesis of neo-orthodoxy, but in a synthesis which reconciles the truths of both.<sup>7</sup>

During the past decade I also gained a new appreciation for the philosophy of existentialism. My first contact with this philosophy came through my reading of [Soren] Kierkegaard and [Friedrich] Nietzsche. Later I turned to a study of [Karl] Jaspers, [Martin] Heidegger and [Jean Paul] Sartre. All of these thinkers stimulated my thinking; while finding things to question in each, I nevertheless learned a great deal from study of them. When I finally turned to a serious study of the works of Paul Tillich I became convinced that existentialism, in spite of the fact that it had become all too fashionable, had grasped certain basic truths about man and his condition that could not be permanently overlooked.<sup>8</sup>

Its understanding of the “finite freedom” of man is one of existentialism’s most lasting contributions, and its perception of the anxiety and conflict produced in man’s personal and social life as a result of the perilous and ambiguous structure of existence is especially meaningful for our time. The common point in all existentialism, whether it is atheistic or theistic, is that man’s existential situation is a state of estrangement from his essential nature. In their revolt against [Georg Wilhelm Friedrich] Hegel’s essentialism, all existentialists contend that the world is fragmented. History is a series of reconciled conflicts and man’s existence is filled with anxiety and threatened with meaninglessness. While the ultimate Christian answer is not found in any of these existential assertions, there is much here that the theologian can use to describe the true state of man’s existence.

Although most of my formal study during this decade has been in systematic theology and philosophy, I have become more and more interested in social ethics. Of course my concern for social problems was already substantial before the beginning of this decade. From my early teens in Atlanta I was deeply concerned about the problem of racial injustice. I grew up abhorring segregation, considering it both rationally inexplicable and morally unjustifiable. I could never accept the fact of having to go to the back of a bus or sit in the segregated section of a train. The first time that I was seated behind a curtain in a dining car I felt as if the curtain had been dropped on my selfhood. I had also learned that the inseparable twin of racial injustice is economic injustice.<sup>9</sup> I saw how the systems of segregation ended up in the exploitation of the Negro as well as the poor whites. Through these early experiences I grew up deeply conscious of the varieties of injustice in our society.



Not until I entered theological seminary, however, did I begin a serious intellectual quest for a method to eliminate social evil. I was immediately influenced by the social gospel. In the early '50s I read Rauschenbusch’s *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, a book which left an indelible imprint on my thinking.<sup>10</sup> Of course there were points at which I differed with Rauschenbusch. I felt that he had fallen victim to the 19th-century “cult of inevitable progress,” which led him to an unwarranted optimism concerning human nature. Moreover, he came perilously close to identifying the kingdom of God with a particular social and economic system—a temptation which the church should never give in to. But in spite of these shortcomings Rauschenbusch gave to American Protestantism a sense of social responsibility that it should never lose. The gospel at its best deals with the whole man, not only his soul but his body, not only his spiritual well-being, but his material well-being. Any religion that professes to be concerned about the souls of men and is not concerned about the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them and the social conditions that cripple them is a spiritually moribund religion awaiting burial.<sup>11</sup>

After reading Rauschenbusch I turned to a serious study of the social and ethical theories of the great philosophers. During this period I had almost despaired of the power of love in solving social problems. The “turn the other cheek” philosophy and the “love your enemies” philosophy are only valid, I felt, when individuals are in conflict with other individuals; when racial groups and nations are in conflict a more realistic approach is necessary. Then I came upon the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. As I read his works I became deeply fascinated by his campaigns of nonviolent resistance. The whole Gandhian concept of satyagraha (satya is truth which equals love, and graha is force; satyagraha thus means truth-force or love-force) was profoundly significant to me. As I delved deeper into the philosophy of Gandhi my skepticism concerning the power of love gradually diminished, and I came to see for the first time that the Christian doctrine of love operating through the Gandhian method of nonviolence was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom. At this time, however, I had a merely intellectual understanding and appreciation of the position, with no firm determination to organize it in a socially effective situation.

When I went to Montgomery, Alabama, as a pastor in 1954, I had not the slightest idea that I would later become involved in a crisis in which nonviolent resistance would be applicable. After I had lived in the community about a year, the bus boycott began. The Negro people of Montgomery, exhausted by the humiliating experiences that they had constantly faced on the buses, expressed in a massive act of noncooperation their determination to be

free. They came to see that it was ultimately more honorable to walk the streets in dignity than to ride the buses in humiliation. At the beginning of the protest the people called on me to serve as their spokesman. In accepting this responsibility my mind, consciously or unconsciously, was driven back to the Sermon on the Mount and the Gandhian method of nonviolent resistance. This principle became the guiding light of our movement. Christ furnished the spirit and motivation while Gandhi furnished the method.<sup>12</sup>

The experience in Montgomery did more to clarify my thinking on the question of nonviolence than all of the books that I had read. As the days unfolded I became more and more convinced of the power of nonviolence. Living through the actual experience of the protest, nonviolence became more than a method to which I gave intellectual assent; it became a commitment to a way of life. Many issues I had not cleared up intellectually concerning nonviolence were now solved in the sphere of practical action.

A few months ago I had the privilege of traveling to India. The trip had a great impact on me personally and left me even more convinced of the power of nonviolence. It was a marvelous thing to see the amazing results of a nonviolent struggle. India won her independence, but without violence on the part of Indians. The aftermath of hatred and bitterness that usually follows a violent campaign is found nowhere in India. Today a mutual friendship based on complete equality exists between the Indian and British people within the commonwealth.

I do not want to give the impression that nonviolence will work miracles overnight. Men are not easily moved from their mental ruts or purged of their prejudiced and irrational feelings. When the underprivileged demand freedom, the privileged first react with bitterness and resistance. Even when the demands are couched in nonviolent terms, the initial response is the same. I am sure that many of our white brothers in Montgomery and across the south are still bitter toward Negro leaders, even though these leaders have sought to follow a way of love and nonviolence. So the nonviolent approach does not immediately change the heart of the oppressor. It first does something to the hearts and souls of those committed to it. It gives them new self-respect; it calls up resources of strength and courage that they did not know they had. Finally, it reaches the opponent and so stirs his conscience that reconciliation becomes a reality.



During recent months I have come to see more and more the need for the method of nonviolence in international relations. While I was convinced during my student days of the power of nonviolence in group conflicts within nations, I was not yet convinced of its efficacy in conflicts between nations. I felt that while war could never be a positive or absolute good, it could serve as a negative good in the sense of preventing the spread and growth of an evil force. War, I felt, horrible as it is, might be preferable to surrender to a totalitarian system. But more and more I have come to the conclusion that the potential destructiveness of modern weapons of war totally rules out the possibility of war ever serving again as a negative good. If we assume that mankind has a right to survive then we must find an alternative to war and destruction. In a day when sputniks dash through outer space and guided ballistic missiles are carving highways of death through the stratosphere, nobody can win a war. The choice today is no longer between violence and non-violence. It is either nonviolence or nonexistence.<sup>13</sup>

I am no doctrinaire pacifist. I have tried to embrace a realistic pacifism. Moreover, I see the pacifist position not as sinless but as the lesser evil in the circumstances. Therefore I do not claim to be free from the moral dilemmas that the Christian nonpacifist confronts. But I am convinced that the church cannot remain silent while mankind faces the threat of being plunged into the abyss of nuclear annihilation. If the church is true to its mission it must call for an end to the arms race.<sup>14</sup>

In recent months I have also become more and more convinced of the reality of a personal God. True, I have always believed in the personality of God. But in past years the idea of a personal God was little more than a metaphysical category which I found theologically and philosophically satisfying. Now it is a living reality that has been validated in the experiences of everyday life. Perhaps the suffering, frustration and agonizing moments which I have had to undergo occasionally as a result of my involvement in a difficult struggle have drawn me closer to God. Whatever the cause, God has been profoundly real to me in recent months. In the midst of outer dangers I have felt an inner calm and known resources of strength that only God could give. In many instances I have felt the power of God transforming the fatigue of despair into the buoyancy of hope. I am convinced that the universe is under the control of a loving purpose and that in the struggle for righteousness man has cosmic companionship. Behind the harsh appearances of the world there is a benign power. To say God is personal is not to make him an object among other objects or attribute to him the finiteness and limitations of human personality; it is to take what is finest and

noblest in our consciousness and firm its perfect existence in him. It is certainly true that human personality is limited, but personality as such involves no necessary limitations. It simply means self-consciousness and self-direction. So in the truest sense of the word, God is a living God. In him there is feeling and will, responsive to the deepest yearnings of the human heart: this God both evokes and answers prayers.

The past decade has been a most exciting one. In spite of the tensions and uncertainties of our age something profoundly meaningful has begun. Old systems of exploitation and oppression are passing away and new systems of justice and equality are being born. In a real sense ours is a great time in which to be alive. Therefore I am not yet discouraged about the future. Granted that the easygoing optimism of yesterday is impossible. Granted that we face a world crisis which often leaves us standing amid the surging murmur of life's restless sea. But every crisis has both its dangers and its opportunities. Each can spell either salvation or doom. In a dark, confused world the spirit of God may yet reign supreme.

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PD. *Christian Century* 77 (13 April 1960): 439-441.

1. This essay bears similarities to chapter six of *Stride Toward Freedom*, a shortened version of which was reprinted in *Fellowship* (see King, "My Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," 1 September 1958, in *Papers* 4:473-481). A revised version of King's essay was later reprinted in a collected volume edited by Fey (*How My Mind Has Changed* [Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1961], pp. 105-115).
2. In notes that King may have written in preparation for this article, he stated: "Of course if by liberalism is meant merely an open and critical mind which refuses to abandon the best light of reason, I hope that I shall always remain a liberal" (King, Notes, "How My Mind Has Changed" series, 13 April 1960). In composing his notes, King may have borrowed language from a brief report written by one of his Boston University classmates on Nels Ferré (Roland Kircher, "Nels Ferré," 27 February 1952).
3. For more on King's reactions to Niebuhr, see "Reinhold Niebuhr's Ethical Dualism," 9 May 1952, and "The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr," April 1953-June 1954, in *Papers* 2:141-152 and 269-279, respectively.
4. Cf. *Stride Toward Freedom*, p. 99.
5. King, Notes: "Liberalism failed to acknowledge that man is mostly a sinner, actually though not essentially, and that with regard to religion his reason is darkened by sin. . . . Neither did liberalism sense that the key to correct reasoning lies in the relation between God's eternal purpose and the historic process, that is, in the relation between eschatology and epistemology."
6. King, Notes: "Neo-orthodoxy came close to being a wounded wing of faith, presenting mostly a general mood of irrationalism, despair, and existentialist revolt against an inadequate liberalism. It tended therefore to stress an unknown God, an absurd faith, and a narrow, self-sufficient Biblicism . . . . Whether for the Church or for personal life, it lacked the serene faith in the Holy Spirit which can bring strength out of weakness and clarity out of confusion."
7. In *Stride Toward Freedom*, King used similar terms to compare Marxism and capitalism (p. 95). In his notes for this article he wrote: "The fluctuating pendulum of my mind seems most merely content to rest in a position between liberalism and neo-orthodoxy, which I have sometimes called Christian Realism and sometimes Evangelical Catholicism."
8. King wrote his doctoral dissertation on Tillich (see "A Comparison of the Conceptions of God in the Thinking of Paul Tillich and Henry Nelson Wieman," 15 April 1955, in *Papers* 2:339-544). 9. *Stride Toward Freedom*, p. 90.
10. Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (New York: Macmillan, 1907).
11. Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Hope of the World*, p. 25: "Any church that pretends to care for the souls of people but is not interested in the slums that damn them, the city government that corrupts them, the economic order that cripples them, and international relationships that, leading to peace or war, determine the spiritual destiny of innumerable souls—that kind of church, I think, would hear again the Master's withering words: 'Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!'" (see also *Stride Toward Freedom*, p. 91).
12. Cf. *Stride Toward Freedom*, p. 85. During the editing of the manuscript for *Stride*, King incorporated his former professor George D. Kelsey's suggestion to stress Christianity as the motivating force behind the Montgomery protest (Kelsey to King, 4 April 1958, in *Papers* 4:394-395).
13. King, Notes: "During this decade I also turned pacifist. Previously I had repudiated aggressive warfare as unchristian. I still accepted the Christian responsibility for constructive force. To accept non-violence as the solely Christian method is to limit our obedience to God to the level of redemption, whereas God has first of all made us creatures in an actual world where, under him, we are responsible for the exercise of constructive compulsion. Christians are not exempt from the disagreeable choices and chores of ordering life, which is dominated more by what men fear than by what they love. But more and more I have come to the conclusion that modern warfare is on such a scale and of such a nature that, regardless of what might be said of wars in the past, future wars can no longer be classified as constructive."
14. King, Notes: "I am no pacifist doctrinaire. I do not believe in the all-inclusiveness of the method of nonviolence, and deplore its being made the center of the gospel, but I believe that the Church cannot dodge taking a stand on the war issue by first finding for itself its own distinctive dimension."

*(Courtesy of [http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/pilgrimage\\_to\\_nonviolence](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/pilgrimage_to_nonviolence))*

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# *Six Principles and Steps of Nonviolence*

## **SIX PRINCIPLES**

- 1. Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people:** It is not a method for cowards; it does resist. If one uses this method because one is afraid or merely lacks the instruments of violence, that person is not truly nonviolence
- 2. The Beloved Community is the goal:** The aftermath of Nonviolence is friendship and understanding among those who are different from you, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness.
- 3. Defeat injustice, not people:** It is evil that the non violent resister seeks to defeat, not the person messenger of evil
- 4. Exchange suffering for Achievement:** The nonviolent resister realizes suffering can educate and transform people and societies.
- 5. Choose loving solutions, not hateful ones:** Avoid internal violence of the spirit as well as external physical violence. The nonviolent resister not only refuses to shoot the opponent but also, refuses to hate them.
- 6. The universe is on the side of justice:** The believer in nonviolence has deep faith in the future, and believes there is a creative force in this universe that's works to bring the disconnected aspects of reality into a harmonious whole.

## **SIX STEPS**

- 1. Gather information:** Learn all you can about the problems you see in your community through the media, social, and civic network.
- 2. Educate Others:** Armed with new knowledge; its your duty to help those around you, such as your neighbors, relatives, friends and co-workers, better understand the problems facing society. Build a team of people devoted to finding solutions. Be sure to include those who will be directly affected by your work.
- 3. Remain Committed:** Accept that you will face many obstacles and challenges as you and your team work to change society. Agree to encourage and inspire one another along the journey.
- 4. Peacefully Negotiate:** Talk with both sides. Yes go to the people in your community who are in trouble and deeply hurt by society ills. Yet also go to those people who are contributing to the break down of a peaceful society. Use humor, intelligence and grace to lead to solutions that benefit the greater good.
- 5. Take Action Peacefully:** This step is often used when negotiation fails to reduce results, or when people need to draw broader attention to a problem. It can include tactics such as peaceful demonstrations, letter writing and petition campaign.
- 6. Reconcile:** Keep all actions and negotiations peaceful and constructive. Agree to disagree with some people and with some groups as you work to improve society. Show all involved, the benefits of changing, not what they will give up by changing.

(For additional material on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Principles of Non-violence, read "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence" in Dr. King's Stride Toward Freedom, Harper & Row. 1958)

# The Nguzo Saba

(Swahili for "The Seven Principles")

When most people think of the Nguzo Saba, it is common for them to immediately associate these principles with the African-centered holiday of Kwanzaa, which takes place every year from December 26 - January 1. However, the Seven Principles upon which Dr. Maulana Karenga laid the foundation for Kwanzaa back in 1968 are descendants of ancient African codes of morality and ethics which believed that maintaining communitarian values as the center of one's worldview was the best way that peace could be both created and maintained. In a country ravaged with gun and gang violence in our schools, domestic violence in our homes, and war abroad, a return to community and peace is needed now more than ever. Churches, synagogues, mosques, schools, families, and people of all racial and cultural backgrounds should adopt the Nguzo Saba as a way of life in order for peace to be a reality in a violent world.

- **Umoja** (Unity) - To strive for and to maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.
- **Kujichagulia** (Self-Determination) - To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves.
- **Ujima** (Collective Work and Responsibility) - To build and maintain our community together and make our brothers' and sisters' problems our problems, and to solve them together.
- **Ujamaa** (Cooperative Economics) - To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.
- **Nia** (Purpose) - To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.
- **Kuumba** (Creativity) - To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.
- **Imani** (Faith) - To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

# Conflict Resolution

National Multicultural Institute's nine-step model

In their efforts to “win” and be “right,” people often let disagreement escalate into a futile and frustrating struggle for power. But conflict doesn't have to be adversarial. When handled carefully, a conflict can defuse hostility, generate alliances, and stimulate creative solutions. In the case of confronting an issue that has been ignored or avoided, conflict can be especially liberating. And the basic tools of conflict resolution can be learned and practiced by anyone. Conflict is an inevitable part of life; therefore it makes sense to learn some simple conflict resolution strategies.

First, take a moment to reflect on a stressful conflict from your recent past. Then as you review the following guidelines, mentally compare each suggestion to what actually happened in your conflict. Imagine how things might have gone differently and pinpoint your particular strengths and weaknesses. Finally, consider how you might adapt your approach to improve the outcome of future conflicts.

1. **Listen with respect and openness:** Before you even begin a discussion, calm yourself and step back from your emotions. Try not to take the situation personally, even if you feel defensive or under attack. Let go of grudges and preconceptions so that you enter the conversation with an open mind. Imagine that you are hearing everything for the first time.
2. **Look at the situation from the other person's perspective:** It's easy to get trapped in tunnel vision, in which we convince ourselves that our way is the only way. Especially if the conflict surrounds a longstanding problem, it's difficult to see things as the other person might see them. But it is crucial to set your pride aside and really listen. Avoid assumptions and ask questions if you don't understand. Verbally summarize what you heard them say and ask for confirmation or clarification.
3. **Let the other person hear an explanation of your perspective.** Explain your viewpoint clearly and patiently. Make sure to separate the person from the problem. In other words, focus on behaviors or situations that you want to change rather than personal traits. If you remain calm, use “I” statements and non-judgmental language, and stick to the facts during this step, then you increase the likelihood that the other person will listen.
4. **Recognize similarities and differences.** Part of this involves defining the problem to ensure that you are talking about the same issue. Too often, people skip this step and simply assume that their respective complaints or goals are mutual. But it's necessary to state the problem explicitly to avoid circling and frustration. Once you establish that you're talking about the same problem, there are always at least one or two points on which you already see things similarly. If you can't find any common ground, you might need to return to step one. As you identify differences, be careful not to use an accusatory or judgmental tone of voice.
5. **Acknowledge any cultural differences.** Sometimes gender, race, religion, and other aspects of cultural identity and values remain an unspoken but powerful factor in a conflict. It's not always easy to bring these into the open, but open acknowledgment of cultural differences can help define the relevant issues and sort out underlying unconscious motivations.
6. **Look for common ground.** Find something—anything—to agree on, even if it's just being able to name a common goal. Remind yourself that everyone will benefit if you can see this as a cooperative process.
7. **Recommend action.** Be creative. Brainstorm as many possibilities as you can without worrying about how to achieve them. Even outlandish ideas might inspire other, more viable ones.
8. **Determine what adaptations each person is willing to make to find a satisfactory alternative.** Where can you be flexible? What are your priorities and needs? See if you can sacrifice a little to accomplish your broader objectives. This is when keeping the “big picture” in mind matters most.
9. **Negotiate an agreement.** Be realistic. You may decide you need to meet again for further discussion. You may have to check with other stakeholders to get their approval for your solutions. Or in some cases, you may just have to agree to disagree. If you find yourself stuck, consider hiring a professional mediator.

In the heat of the moment, it sometimes feels more important to be right than to maintain a respectful, win-win attitude. But if you approach your conflict with goodwill, calm, and trust in the collaborative process, you'll find that even monumental conflicts can be overcome.

In most cases, conflict is about more than one issue; it's about a relationship. Recognize that with a little give and take, the conflict resolution process has the potential to strengthen your rapport with others. And each successful resolution will give you the confidence and abilities to negotiate future encounters with ease.



# *Family & Community*

## **COMMUNITY TAKE BACK DEMANDS**

**Faith Community of Saint Sabina  
Rev. Michael L. Pflieger, Pastor**

### *Preventing Violence Begins with Each One of Us*

**We Make the Following Demands from Each Citizen:**

**Whereas, we acknowledge that our community has been unlawfully seized from us while we were silent, and that we have not only the right, but the duty to take it back;**

**Whereas, we desire to improve the quality of life of those living in our community and acknowledge that all people deserve to live in a safe, loving and nurturing environment;**

**Whereas, violence and abuse in all forms are serious social problems that can be prevented and that everyone must work to end.**

**Whereas, as adults we are responsible for providing safety for our children and are called to secure for them their future.**

**Whereas, the strength of any community is found in its citizens living and working together in a spirit of cooperation across lines of class, culture, color and creed to develop, rebuild and sustain that community; and by working together, all are enriched.**

**Whereas, preventing violence and abuse begins with each one of us as individual stakeholders in our community;**

**We make the following demands of each citizen of our community.**

**We demand that every business that benefits from our patronage, whether uptown, downtown, or here in the community, whether small or large, employ at least one youth part-time or full time this summer.**

**We demand that park districts establish attractive quality programming for our youth.**

**We demand that every church, mosque or synagogue open its doors for youth, and develop and maintain quality youth programs to draw our young people off the streets. And call them to meet outside before Bible Study and choir rehearsal to create a presence in the community.**

**We demand that each citizen commit his/her support to community organizations and faith-based organizations working to end all forms of violence.**

**We demand that the residents of each block maintain the cleanliness and order of their property and turn on their porch lights at night.**

**We demand that each resident take charge of the safety of that block watch and patrol that block, hold outdoor block club meetings and activities for the residents and youth on that block.**

**We demand that CAPS hold their meetings outdoors during the summer.**

**We demand that every parent provides for and ensures the supervision of their children and enter into partnerships with the schools that their children attend.**

We demand that all schools continue to make adequate yearly progress on strengthening the curriculum and teaching conflict resolution so that our youth become aware of their relationship to each discipline, are able to compete on the world stage and can see themselves and others depicted accurately in history.

We demand that the violence plaguing our cities be seen as a National Emergency and that Federal financial resources are given to cities for jobs for adults and youth, youth alternatives and strategies to stop the violence.

We demand that elected officials in Springfield and Washington ban assault weapons and stop the easy access to guns by titling guns like cars.

We demand that each citizen work collaboratively with the schools in their community to expand programming and improve their capacity to serve the needs of our youth and prepare them to give service to themselves, their families, their communities and society.

We demand that every parent, teacher, mentor, neighbor and street organization member challenge our fellow community members to recognize that they can be powerful without making others powerless.

We demand that each member of our community commit to treating one another with dignity and respect.

We demand that each citizen take a stand and never commit, condone, accept or remain silent about violence.

We demand that each citizen does that which is necessary and within his/her realm of influence and power to foster a community which is respectful, safe, and fair for all people.

### **CREATE PEACE BY...**

- Keep outside porch light ON after dark
- Change the light bulb outside of the your home to Blue during the week of the Building initiative
- Set a curfew for your children
- Obtain contact Information from your children's friends
- Have family game nights once or twice a month
- Become active in the block clubs
- Encourage your staff to become mentors or to volunteer with youth-serving organizations that promote violence prevention
- Adopt a school or organization that promotes violence prevention activities
- Encourage a brown bag lunch and invite a guest speaker or parents to discuss unlearning the culture of violence being promoted to youth Talk to your children about ways to avoid violence and what you have done in your life to resolve situations which could have led to violence
- Ask your kids to visit resources/organizations on the web that promote youth violence prevention and have them talk to you about them
- Have a discussion with your kids about ways to "cool down" when angered
- Offer your time, talent and energy to help out with local events during the week
- Start or join a neighborhood discussion on violence prevention

# Church

## LITANY FOR PEACE

By Joe Wadsworth

*Framed within the Lord's Prayer*

Leader: Gracious God; timeless and Ageless God; you have commanded us to love our enemies. You yourself gave your life for those who were motivated by hatred.

Parishioners: Our Father, who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name....

L: You have watched humanity fight and scrap. You have watched with sadness as your creation is hoarded and divided for spoil under the guise of dominion. Help us seek your will in our lives. Make us your ambassadors as well as your disciples.

P: ... Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven....

L: You sent your only Son so that your people; All your people, might truly know of your love and of your peace. That we might fully understand your AGAPE, your SHALOM. In a time of war, our hearts need your assurance and your presence confirmed. Our leaders need to sense your power is the strengths they employ.

P: ... Give us this day our Daily Bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors...

L: It is so easy to reap a harvest of anger and revenge. Our hearts so easily fill with rage and discord. When war rages, sometimes our patriotism supersedes our mandate for peace and reconciliation. Forgive us our anger and grant us hearts of renewing peace. Help us be mirrors of your life even in times of discord.

P: ... For Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever...

L: And so, Lord God of Creation, Savior of the World, we pray for a new chapter of peace to open. Before the momentum of hatred eclipses our strength to control it, grant us peace within. Create in us a clean heart and peaceful mind. This is the nature of your Kingdom; this is the basis of your power, and this is the joy of your Glory. Give us peace.

All: Amen

### CREATE PEACE BY...

- Open doors of the church for at least one day of the week for afterschool activities
- Teach Conflict Resolution in Sunday school courses
- Encourage parishioners to break the "Code of Silence"
- Hold prayer gatherings or peace vigils that promote violence free communities and/or violence prevention strategies in religious sermons/gatherings
- Encourage church members to become Block Club captains
- Work with other churches, civic clubs, community groups, fraternal organizations, etc. with initiatives for peace
- Faith groups can ask congregation members to support local youth violence prevention activities

# Youth

I pledge to respectfully address conflict with my peers and family.

I pledge to have an open mind to making changes in myself, others, and community.

I pledge to respect people different from myself and try to understand where they're coming from.

By committing to this pledge I will become a positive productive, engaged member of my community.

"We will reverse the violence.

We will invest in our communities.

We will understand the impact of our actions.

We will educate others in non-violence.

We will take a stand.

We will shape our own future!"

## **CREATE PEACE BY...**

- Get involved in extra-curricular activities
- Mentor a younger child in your neighborhood
- Encourage your peers to break the "Code of Silence"
- Find an alternative and non-violent way to express anger and frustration Host a mini "Mix It Up Day" (<http://www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up>)
- Create a quilt of diversity using fabric or other mediums that represent each students' cultural heritage
- Host a poster, Public Service Announcement (PSA), spoken word, or mural contest for youth on the theme of Peace and the role of Youth in Peace-making
- Conduct facilitated discussions on Youth Violence Prevention-related topics: stress management, resolving conflicts without violence, busting the myth of snitching, avoiding peer pressure. Use youth as facilitators or invite specialists.
- Make a Peace Makers Hall of Fame bulletin board in your school that pays tribute to local, national and international figures who have resolved conflict peacefully
- Offer your time to community based organizations working on violence prevention
- Utilize various social networking mediums (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter) to raise awareness of violence prevention. Create your own video/tool or support others that have created one
- Organize a service project where you and your friends volunteer with youth-serving organizations that promote violence prevention.
- Ask your teacher to have a classroom discussion on ways to reduce violence in school
- Ask your school principal or park supervisor if you could paint a peaceful mural over graffiti in school or parks

# Web Resources

- **Chicago**

- Hip Hop Detox: [www.hiphopdetoxonline.com](http://www.hiphopdetoxonline.com).
- A Knock at Midnight: [www.akamworks.org](http://www.akamworks.org).
- St. Sabina Church: [www.saintsabina.org](http://www.saintsabina.org).
- Target Area Development Corp: [www.targetarea.org](http://www.targetarea.org).
- UCAN : [www.ucanchicago.org](http://www.ucanchicago.org).
- Purpose Over Pain: [www.purposeoverpain.org](http://www.purposeoverpain.org)
- Kids of the Block: [www.kidsoftheblock.bbnw.org](http://www.kidsoftheblock.bbnw.org)
- Team Work Englewood: [www.teamworkenglewood.org](http://www.teamworkenglewood.org)

- **National**

- Prevention Institute: [www.preventioninstitute.org](http://www.preventioninstitute.org)
- National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center: [www.safeyouth.org](http://www.safeyouth.org)
- Centers For Disease Control and Prevention:  
[www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/youthviolence/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/youthviolence/index.html)
- Students Against Violence Everywhere: [www.nationalsave.org](http://www.nationalsave.org)
- National Youth Violence Prevention Campaign: [www.nyvvpw.org](http://www.nyvvpw.org)
- Harvard Youth Violence Prevention Center: [www.hsph.harvard.edu/hyvpc](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/hyvpc)
- *In the Mix: Reality Television for Teens* (PBS): [www.pbs.org/inthemix](http://www.pbs.org/inthemix)
- National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention:  
[www.promoteprevent.org/publications](http://www.promoteprevent.org/publications)
- Office of Justice Programs – Youth Violence Prevention:  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/programs/youthviolenceprevention.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/programs/youthviolenceprevention.htm)
- Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence: [www.colorado.edu/cspv/index.html](http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/index.html)