

CHRIST AND CHANGE

Introduction – Christians have been at the front of social change through history. Beginning with opposition to infanticide and the blood sport in the Roman arena, they taught the dignity of every individual. Wilberforce ended the slave trade in Britain and Martin Luther King led the civil rights movement in America. The Christian idea of nonviolent resistance has worked in diverse places, such as India and Poland. They are a work in progress in China. There is not enough Christian influence for it to work in the Middle East.

- A. Jesus' teaching and example are the moral basis for nonviolent protest against injustice.

Matthew 5:38-44

1. Turning the other cheek in resistance to an evil person is the core concept presented here.
2. We must love and pray for those who persecute us to effect real change.
3. The cross of Christ is the most powerful example of nonviolent resistance.

- B. The Christian congregation is the place where worldly prejudice and division is overcome.

Ephesians 2:14-17

1. The dividing wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles would have appeared insurmountable before Christ.
2. God's purpose is to create one new humanity in Christ, not to negotiate compromises between separate groups.
3. The peace of Rome stood in stark contrast to the peace of Christ.
4. Both sides had to repent before they could find common ground in Christ.

- C. God has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:16-20

1. The prime reconciliation is between us and God that makes us a new creation capable of change.
2. This leads to us not judging anyone from a worldly point of view.

3. As ambassadors of Christ we have a message and ministry of reconciliation that is humanity's only hope for real and lasting change.

Conclusion – Secular societal attempts to change only alienates groups and polarizes people. It threatens people with violence to produce change through fear. The results are conflict, then anarchy, and finally an authoritarian solution. The French Revolution is a model of a secular change movement.