



Put Your Money Where Your Protest Is

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Since January 2025, we have witnessed a nonstop flow of actions, interventions and statements that run counter to our [AB1.1] ideals of faith, justice and integrity. Many of us are frustrated and dismayed.

Justice advocates have hastened to default to a tactic known since the civil rights era: protest. Millions have taken to the streets in cities, written letters to elected officials, rallied support for new political candidates, crowded out civic meetings. We rely on these tactics of protest—so predictable now that they barely register in the minds of the powerful—because doing so gives us a sense of involvement. Many well-minded people feel that they are responding to injustice in the best way possible.

Using protests, Dr. King took us to an unforeseen level of transformation in the Civil Rights era. But protests for civil rights were not organized responses to random acts of evil. Dr. King's movement pursued a strategy that included not just protests, but getting the attention of elected officials, moving the sentiments of the majority of folks who were not out in the streets, and fostering a national sense of moral outrage to create conditions for major policy changes to happen. It was not about going out in the streets to make noise and get on TV.

Today, we must understand our twenty-first century calling to take justice-making to another level. The strength and beauty of the United Church of Christ is that our faith drives us to creativity in the ways we pursue justice. Protest



remains essential to the strategy, but it is not alone. In an era when “capital is king,” we must not ignore the justice-making capacity of capital controlled by people of faith and their institutions.

In a cryptic parable in Luke 16, Jesus commends a larcenous servant for using his master’s money to bring about justice. This Robin Hood–style thinking is not what affluent Christians are prone to embrace. UCC folks have a split mind around money. We don’t want the clergy involved in financial affairs. We invest our endowments seeking maximum financial return and little or no Gospel guidance. We have no qualms about spending down endowments to “keep the church going until we close” while we resist any idea for a new future. Our congregations are vital economic entities in every locale. When we ignore the ministry implications of how we deploy our assets, we unwittingly choose injustice.

If we are willing to take our bodies into the streets to protest, we must also be brave enough to use our financial assets to advance the impacts of the Gospel. We must decolonize our thinking about financial assets held by the church. If we do not act to transform our money into mission, we are complicit in the injustice that we protest in the streets.

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