A black and white photograph of three graduates in caps and gowns. The graduates are positioned in the foreground, with their bodies and gowns filling most of the frame. They are looking directly at the camera with neutral expressions. The background is a brick wall, partially visible on the left side. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

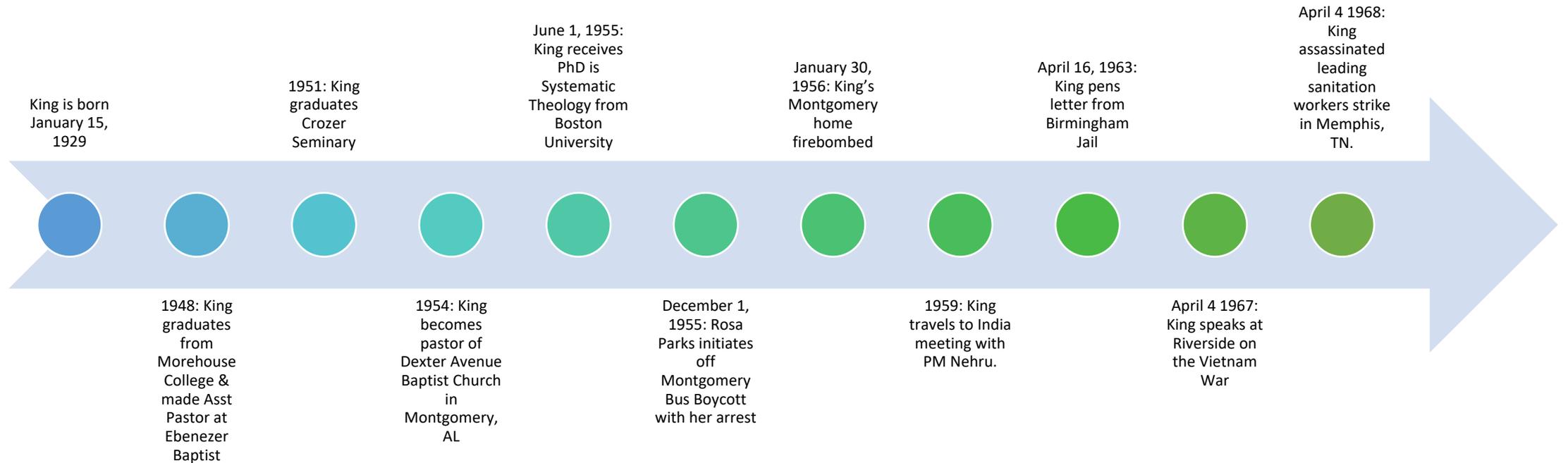
# King & the Journey to Justice

Adult Education Class

Community Presbyterian Church of Clarendon Hills

January 15, 2023

# The trajectory of King's Call: A Timeline



# Roots: Family Business

- Daddy King – Rev. Martin Luther King Sr.



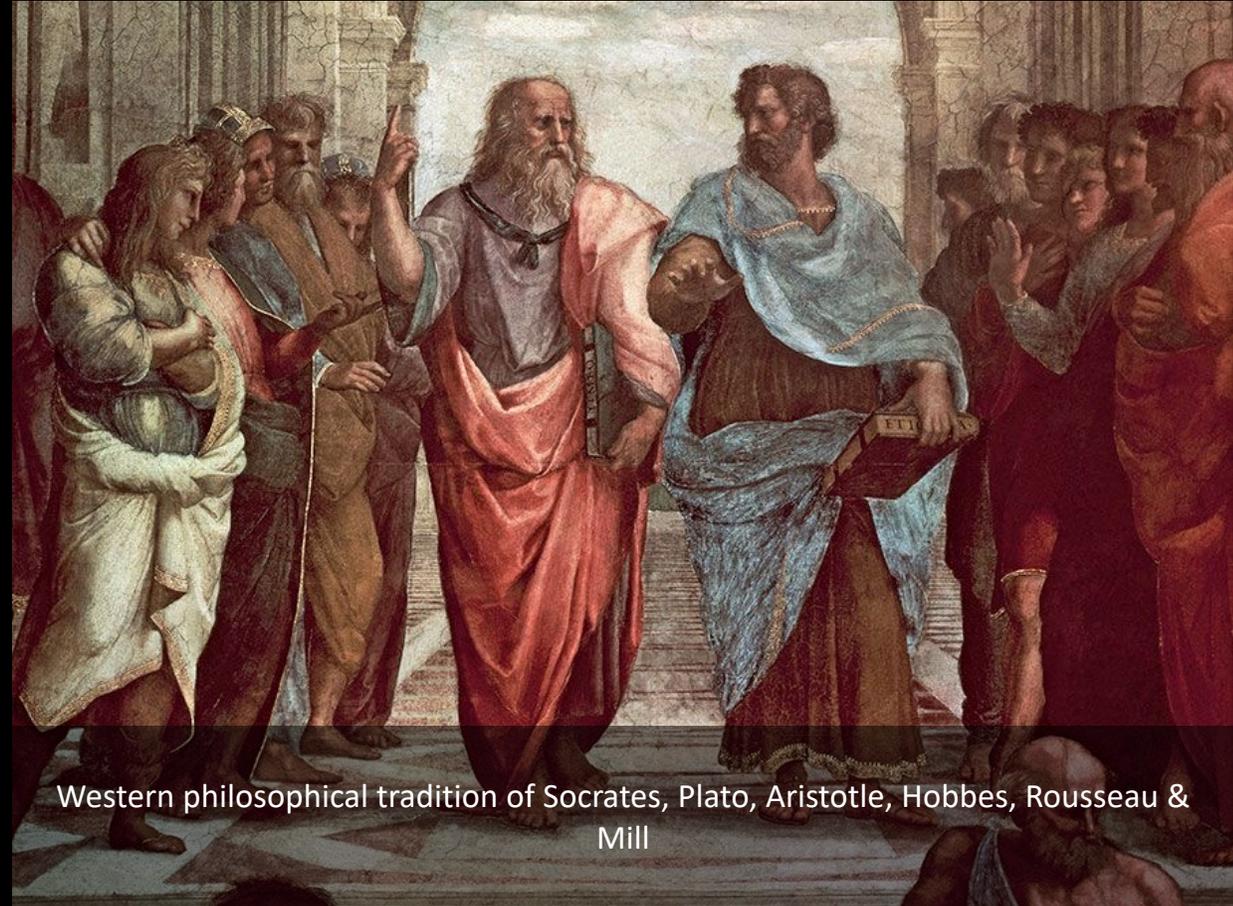
# Roots: Seminary Influences



## A Theology for the Social Gospel

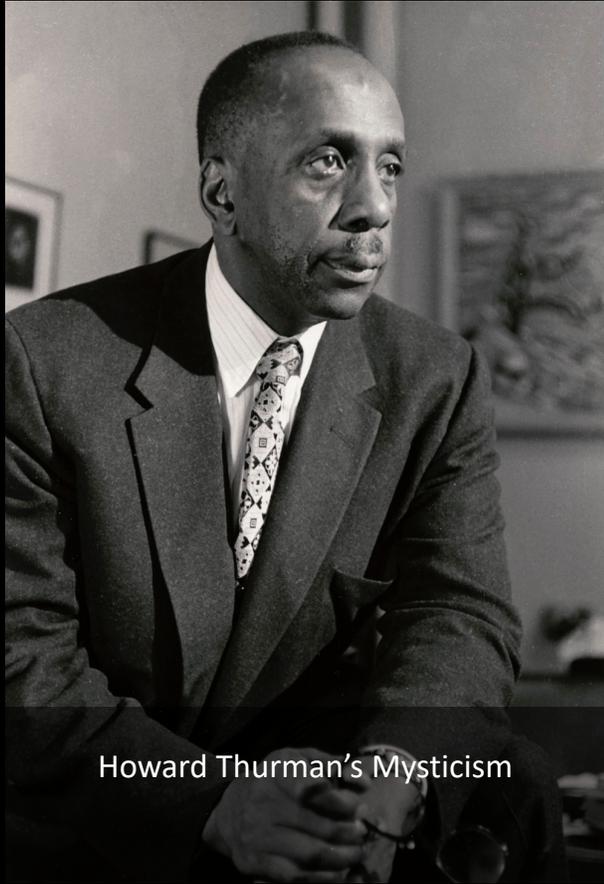
Walter Rauschenbusch

Engagement with 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century Social Gospel Movements (Paul Rauschenbusch)

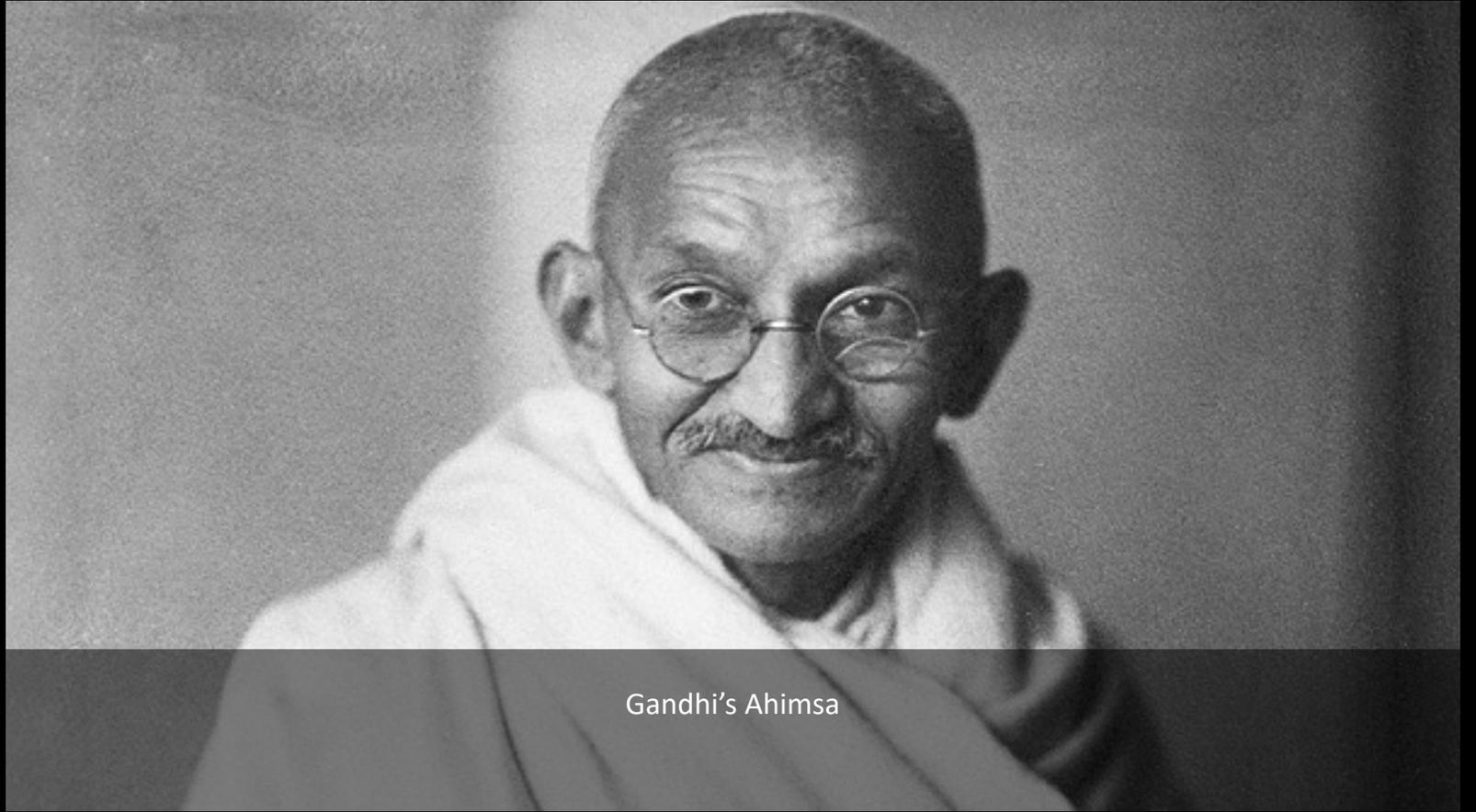


Western philosophical tradition of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Rousseau & Mill

# Roots: Non-violent Direct Action



Howard Thurman's Mysticism



Gandhi's Ahimsa

What understandings of race and your place within a racial structure did you inherit from your family and community?

When did you feel a new truth about race that unsettled you?

# Phase 2: God at the Kitchen Table

From King's Book *Stride to Freedom*:

*I was ready to give up. With my cup of coffee sitting untouched before me, I tried to think of a way to move out of the picture without appearing a coward. In this state of exhaustion, when my courage had all but gone, I decided to take my problem to God. With my head in my hands, I bowed over the kitchen table and prayed aloud.*

*The words I spoke to God that midnight are still vivid in my memory. "I am here taking a stand for what I believe is right. But now I am afraid. The people are looking to me for leadership, and if I stand before them without strength and courage, they too will falter. I am at the end of my powers. I have nothing left. I've come to the point where I can't face it alone."*

*At that moment, I experienced the presence of the Divine as I had never experienced God before. It seemed as though I could hear the quiet assurance of an inner voice saying: "Stand up for justice, stand up for truth; and God will be at your side forever." Almost at once my fears began to go. My uncertainty disappeared. I was ready to face anything."*

What was a time when you realized that living into God's justice might involve significant cost?

# Phase 3: An Address at Riverside Church

## **Outline of Address:**

- I. Connection between Preacherly Vocation and War Criticism
- II. Problematic history and consequence of war
- III. 5 point plea
  - I. End all bombing in North and South Vietnam.
  - II. Declare a unilateral cease-fire in the hope that such action will create the atmosphere for negotiation.
  - III. Take immediate steps to prevent other battlegrounds in Southeast Asia by curtailing our military buildup in Thailand and our interference in Laos.
  - IV. Realistically accept the fact that the National Liberation Front has substantial support in South Vietnam and must thereby play a role in any meaningful negotiations and any future Vietnam government.
  - V. Set a date that we will remove all foreign troops from Vietnam in accordance with the 1954 Geneva Agreement.
- IV. Revolution of Values
- V. Urgency of Choice



## Phase 3: An Address at Riverside Church

“Over the past two years, as I have moved to break the betrayal of my own silences and to speak from the burnings of my own heart, as I have called for radical departures from the destruction of Vietnam, many persons have questioned me about the wisdom of my path.”



## Phase 3: An Address at Riverside Church

“And so we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools. And so we watch them in brutal solidarity burning the huts of a poor village, but we realize that they would hardly live on the same block in Chicago. I could not be silent in the face of such cruel manipulation of the poor.”

# Phase 3: An Address at Riverside Church

"In 1957 when a group of us formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, we chose as our motto: "To save the soul of America." We were convinced that we could not limit our vision to certain rights for black people, but instead affirmed the conviction that America would never be free or saved from itself until the descendants of its slaves were loosed completely from the shackles they still wear. In a way we were agreeing with Langston Hughes, that black bard of Harlem, who had written earlier:

*O, yes,  
I say it plain,  
America never was America to me,  
And yet I swear this oath --  
America will be!*

Now, it should be incandescently clear that no one who has any concern for the integrity and life of America today can ignore the present war."

# Phase 3: An Address at Riverside Church

"I cannot forget that the Nobel Peace Prize was also a commission, a commission to work harder than I had ever worked before for "the brotherhood of man." This is a calling that takes me beyond national allegiances, but even if it were not present I would yet have to live with the meaning of my commitment to the ministry of Jesus Christ. To me the relationship of this ministry to the making of peace is so obvious that I sometimes marvel at those who ask me why I'm speaking against the war. Could it be that they do not know that the good news was meant for all men -- for Communist and capitalist, for their children and ours, for black and for white, for revolutionary and conservative? Have they forgotten that my ministry is in obedience to the One who loved his enemies so fully that he died for them? What then can I say to the Vietcong or to Castro or to Mao as a faithful minister of this One? Can I threaten them with death or must I not share with them my life?

And finally, as I try to explain for you and for myself the road that leads from Montgomery to this place I would have offered all that was most valid if I simply said that I must be true to my conviction that I share with all men the calling to be a son of the living God. Beyond the calling of race or nation or creed is this vocation of sonship and brotherhood, and because I believe that the Father is deeply concerned especially for his suffering and helpless and outcast children, I come tonight to speak for them."



# Phase 3: An Address at Riverside Church

"Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism. With this powerful commitment we shall boldly challenge the status quo and unjust mores, and thereby speed the day when "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain."<sup>3</sup>



A genuine revolution of values means in the final analysis that our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Every nation must now develop an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in their individual societies.



This call for a worldwide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class, and nation is in reality a call for an all-embracing -- embracing and unconditional love for all mankind."

# Phase 3: A Sermon at Riverside Church

"As that noble bard of yesterday, James Russell Lowell, eloquently stated:

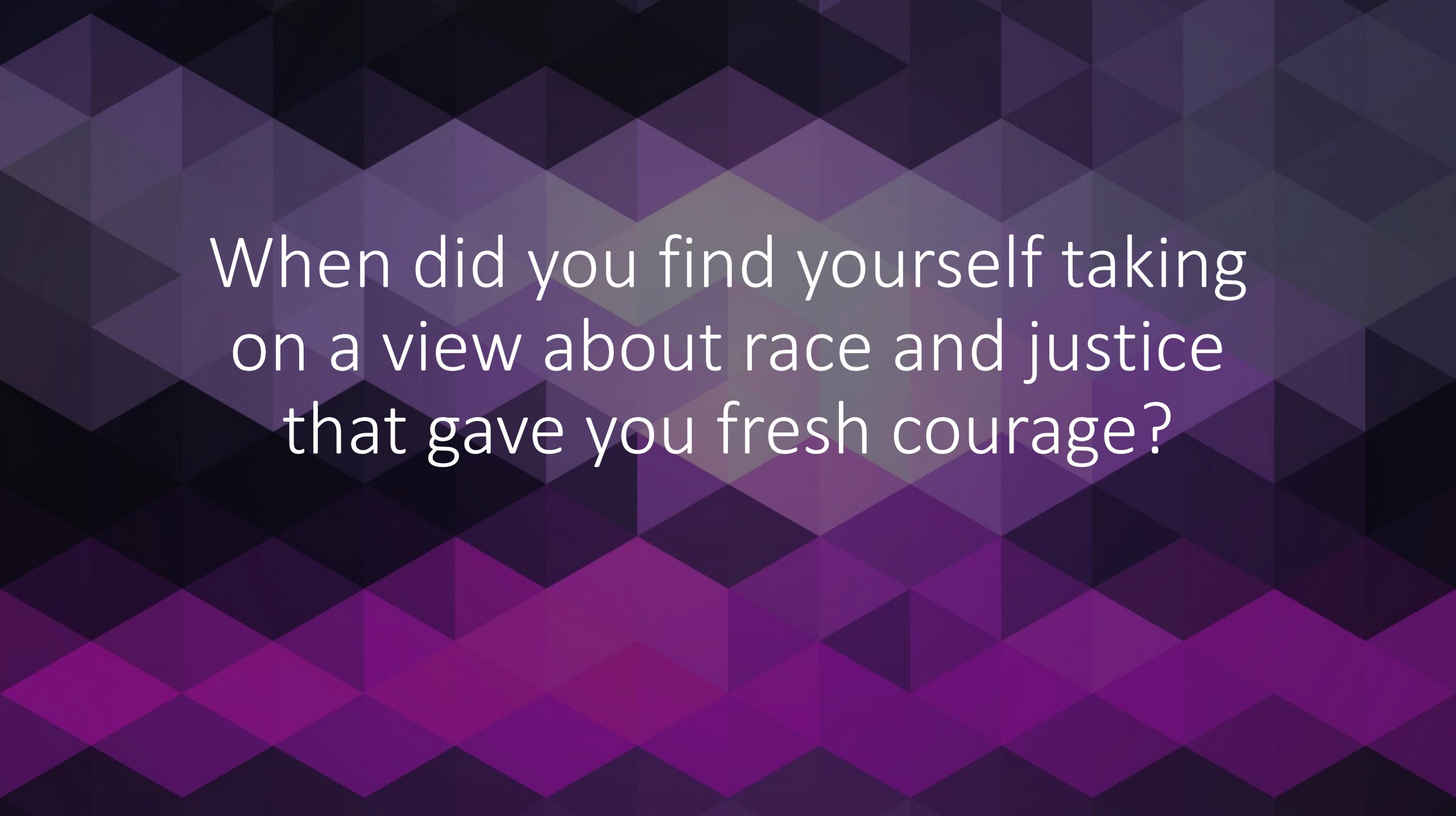
*Once to every man and nation comes a moment to decide,  
In the strife of truth and Falsehood, for the good or evil side;  
Some great cause, God's new Messiah offering each the bloom or blight,  
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that light.  
Though the cause of evil prosper, yet 'tis truth alone is strong  
Though her portions be the scaffold, and upon the throne be wrong  
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown  
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.*

And if we will only make the right choice, we will be able to transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of peace.

If we will make the right choice, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our world into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.

If we will but make the right choice, we will be able to speed up the day, all over America and all over the world,

when "justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."



When did you find yourself taking  
on a view about race and justice  
that gave you fresh courage?