

Thomas G. Walsh
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"Searching for Peace: A Conversation about Race, Justice, Trust and Community"

To see the June 5th webinar, click on the following:

Link to

Video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbGwd0K294I

Link to

Podcast: soundcloud.com/upfpeacetalks/peacetalks8

June 5, 2020, UPF-International held a web conference titled "Searching for Peace: A Conversation about Race, Justice, Trust and Community." The conference had over 600 viewers from nearly 40 countries.

Dr. Thomas Walsh (*chair, UPF International*) gave the opening remarks and introduced the panelists. Many cities in the United States are in turmoil, facing a mix of peaceful, demonstrations, civil unrest, and occasional violence, arising out of the horrific killing of George Floyd by a police officer in Minnesota several days ago. Most demonstrators are outraged by what they believe to be a pattern of racism within the law enforcement and criminal justice system, if not society at large, a pattern that unfairly targets people of color. Others emphasize a wider context of economic inequality. To complicate matters further, citizens throughout the country, and world are stressed by the lockdown of many cities due to the pandemic. What

can be done to re-establish conditions of trust and solidarity, dialogue and cooperation, reform and social transformation? Our panelists join in a conversation to search for peace in our cities.

Panelists:



Dr. Michael Jenkins (*Chairman, UPF USA; President, UPF International*) spoke first. The protests against discriminatory policing are very diverse. Racism is a conflict that touches everyone, and religious leaders have a key role in pushing back against racism. Coming to terms with our own prejudices and shortcomings is a complex, personal process for every individual.

Dr. Jenkins and Rev. Rouse went to Charleston on the anniversary of a mass shooting in a predominantly black church. On that occasion, religious leaders and community organizers successfully quelled any impulse to violence or destruction. Dr. Jenkins concluded by expressing his hope for the future.



Rev. VJ Smith (*National & Minneapolis President, Men Against Destruction Defending Against Drugs & Social Disorder, MADDADS*) gave his remarks next. He spoke of the “five Rs” necessary to move forward: rebuild our communities; reform our laws; restructure our institutions; revitalize our communities; and refuse to accept the status quo from before these events.



Hon. Loretta Sanchez (*Member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1997-2017)*) followed Rev. Smith. In July of 2012, a police officer in Hon. Sanchez’s district shot a young Latino man, resulting in protests and rioting. The rioting was largely perpetrated by people coming in from outside the community, and was quelled in-part by organizations of mothers within the community. The federal Department of Justice also sent a pair of

professional community mediators to build programs and trust in the neighborhood. This work has paid off; Anaheim has seen protests in the wake of the killing of George Floyd, but has not seen the kind of violence or rioting that has happened in many other parts of the country.



Dr. William Lay (*Professor of Criminal Justice, University of Bridgeport*) gave his remarks next. His students represent a broad cross-section of American society: aspiring attorneys, police officers, advocates, and more. Black Americans have to give their children particular warnings about how to behave in public to avoid being labeled a certain way and harassed by police. Dr. Lay called for more “listening” to the communities affected by racism and problems in policing. He spoke skeptically of the ability of government to bring economic vitality to struggling community, calling for private generosity.



Ms. Gloria Howard-Geraldo (*President of Rotary Club of North Minneapolis, Minnesota*) followed Dr. Lay. Before we can get to Rev. Smith’s “five Rs,” we need to “rewrite” our narrative in order to get to the root of the problems. We will likely see change from the current protests, but it very well may not be lasting change. Everyone needs to be educated on American history; there is a great disparity in the United States with regard to how much African American history is taught in schools. Education can lead to widespread empathy, compassion, and love for our fellow Americans. The problems we face are generational and they require generational solutions



Dr. Luonne Rouse (*United Methodist Pastor; Co-Chairman of ACLC*) was the last panelist. In 1913, W.E.B. Dubois labeled race the “problem of the 20th century,” but the problem persists to this day. Rev. Rouse called attention to the Wisdom Literature of the Bible, which advises us to never

let wisdom and understanding go. As a Methodist minister, Rev. Rouse preaches and teaches love, and he sees that principle alive in the UPF community. He called for communities, religious leaders, and law enforcement to communicate and teach one-another to bring about change. His conclusion called back to an experience he had in 1990: Rev. Rouse saw a young black man being beaten by a group of police which included a black officer. He saw then that the problem was not merely a racial one, but a failure to recognize human dignity.

Q&A: Rev. Smith called for an end to “top-down” approaches; change must be initiated by communities rather than high-level officials. Hon. Sanchez emphasized the widening gap between wealthy and poor in the United States as a significant source of future public anger. Ms. Howard-Geraldo observed the need for basic economic skills education in disadvantaged communities; when people have that basic knowledge, they are able to find greater success. Dr. Jenkins emphasized that the only way to bring peace is through love, not through force.

The next webinar will be announced soon.

Upcoming Events

- JUN 21: [International Day of Yoga](#)
- JUN 30: [UN International Day of Parliamentarism](#)
- JUL 18: [Nelson Mandela International Day](#)
- AUG 19: [UN International Day of Peace](#)
- AUG 19: [UN World Humanitarian Day](#)



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