

UPF: The Struggle for Equality -- A Partial Transcript of UPF Peace Talk 8

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Good morning. Welcome to another Peace Talk of the Universal Peace Federation. We are happy you are with us for this important program, entitled Searching for Peace in Our Cities: a conversation about race, justice, trust and community. We are living through challenging times. We have had webinars over the last couple of months on the Covid-19 Crisis, on the emergence of the cold war between the US and China, on problems that remain in the Middle East. On top of that, we have seen in the United States the tragic killing of an African American by a police officer in the US State of Minnesota that has struck deeply into the heart of this country and has reverberated around the world.

We are reminded of what some call America's original sin, slavery and our tortured history of race relations in this country. So it has brought forward demonstrations that are being held widely throughout America as I am sure all of you are aware. So we want today to have a conversation about what is going on in America now: What are its root causes? What are things we can do to overcome this current crisis and move beyond -- productively, constructively and positively -- to build the kind of world, the kind of community, based on mutual trust and mutual respect, where the dignity and value of every human being is cherished as well as our natural environment.

We all want that world, but we are struggling to achieve it. It seems to be coming out loud and clear at this moment in our national history. I think this issue is not just a United States' issue, but the spotlight is coming, emerging out of the recent killing in Minnesota of George Floyd -- and others elsewhere that have sparked so much outrage.

We have a strong panel. We have Michael Jenkins, president of UPF-International and chair of UPF-USA. Rev. V. J. Smith, from Minnesota, a pastor who is the national and Minneapolis president of Men Against Destruction, Defending Against Drugs and Social Disorder (MADDADS) an NGO. We have Loretta Sanchez, who served some twenty years in the US House of Representatives, from California; Professor William Lay from the Criminal Justice Department of the University of Bridgeport; Miss Gloria Howard-Geraldo, president of the North Minnesota Rotary Club; and finally from ACLC, its co-chairman and a Methodist pastor, Dr. Luonne Rouse.