

Call to Conference-Wide Prayer

From the Conference Minister from June 4, 2020 Coconut Wireless

Like me, many of you are beside yourself with the scenes playing out nightly of protestors and clashes and unrest. Let me state unequivocally that black rage is legitimate, and any solution which seeks to ignore or play down this rage is not a solution but a whitewashing of the decay and death that resides within our culture. We exist in a social system that is built on the premise that certain lives do not matter: the native American Indian, the African American, the Latinx American, the poor, sexual and gender minorities, and others. No doubt some permutation of this thought was behind the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy.

Matters are further confused due to the continuous embrace of the non-Christian principal that might makes right. The militarization of our police forces and calls to "dominate" are not ethics born of the way of Jesus which brings good tidings to the poor, proclaims release to the captive, recovering of sight to the blind and sets the prisoner free (Luke 4:18). Yet, here we are in a system propped up by the notion that some lives do not matter and that is willing to back up that belief with violence. If this were untrue, then we would not witness armed white protestors ignored by the powers while unarmed black and other people of color are met with bullets and death.

God's winds of Pentecost not only blow through the church, they also blow through whole societies to shake up systemic oppression. While we watch God's name get batted around, let us not forget that God is not a plaything, and no person or institution is beyond the reach of God's Pentecostal fire. Those of us who enjoy the benefits of our station in this culture must be open to criticism for our slow response and our inability to address inequality. Let us model those police departments that have met the protestors, laid down their gear, and walked in common cause together. Let us search our own thoughts for stereotypes of others, be in conversation about the sins of our racially-biased system, and support networks and non-profits which are given over to advancing equality in our culture, among other resolutions.

Finally, let the Hawai'i Conference come together in prayer **this Friday, June 5, from 12 noon to 12:05 p.m.** As God's 'ohana, you are invited to gather in your home or with those at work to be in prayer for our nation, our leaders, and our children. Black lives do matter and we need to claim that on the altar of prayer with our God.

Rev. Dr. David K. Popham
Conference Minister