



George Floyd should still be alive today. Right now, Breanna Taylor should be finishing up work, contemplating what's for dinner, and Duante Wright should be experiencing joy with his daughter. Ma'Khia Bryant should be filming a hair tutorial video on Tik Tok, Adam Toledo should be playing with his little sister Kaylah, and Andrew Brown should be on his way to see his children. However, at the hands of state-sanctioned law enforcement, this is no longer a reality.

While Derek Chauvin's guilty verdict feels like a step in the right direction, Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement (C.O.P.E) stands firm that this is not the epitome of accountability and transformation. The truth is that without transformation in our justice system and true accountability, we will continue to see our family and community members murdered by law enforcement. We will continue to experience rage, anxiety, and the effects of intergenerational trauma while witnessing a trial for a murder that was broadcasted worldwide. Although the actions of one police officer were held accountable, we recognize that this was not systemic change nor real justice. Since the beginning of the Chauvin trial, 64 lives have been taken by the hands of the police. Real justice would mean living in a world where people like Derek Chauvin and those deemed to protect our communities would never have the power to harm in the first place.

This type of systemic change does not come quickly, but that is the vision we are working toward every day. Our people deserve more. Our families deserve to live freely and authentically with the acknowledgment that our lives and the lives of our community members matter.

Part of resistance is taking care of ourselves and our bodies, whether that means taking a moment to catch our breath, cry, dance, or be in community with one another. It is imperative to advocate for our well-being, as our bodies are our agents of change and allow us to not only exist but thrive. Using the fortitude of our ancestors, we continue this fight for justice for ourselves and for generations to come. Black lives matter and should be valued at all costs.

For David the Psalmist said in *Psalms 139:14* ***“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”***