

MLK's Niece Urges Prayer After Teen Michael Brown's Killing Near St. Louis

In the following commentary, Alveda King responds to the death of Michael Brown, the unarmed 18-year-old who allegedly was gunned down by a police officer Saturday in Ferguson, Missouri, outside of St. Louis.

This time let's not spin this into yet another argument over gun control. Let's do something to stop the killing of our children and our young people. Michael could have been stabbed or choked to death. The method isn't the problem. The problem is that our society must begin to value life, tempered with justice and liberty for everyone.

Amid reported angry protests of racial profiling, intended peaceful prayer vigils are turning violent as protesters of the youth's death are taking to streets with torches, looting and stealing and rampaging local business establishments.

This painful incident brings to mind my father, the Rev. A.D. King in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963 when our home was fire-bombed by rabid racists. The people were angry and wanted to riot. Daddy stood on the hood of a car with a megaphone and calmed the people. This is not the time to riot. This is the time to pray. Please, protest, stand up for our rights, but do this with nonviolence!

In memory of my father and in honor to God, I urge nonviolence in the demand for justice of Michael's death. This is not the time to burn, this is the time to turn our prayers toward heaven and seek nonviolent and just solutions to what happened to Michael. This must be done for his family, his neighbors and our nation.

When a child is killed in the womb, or years later, his or her dreams are aborted. In order for justice to prevail, hearts need to be calmed, tempers need to be calmed, the facts need to be determined. In order for justice to prevail, the judicial system must be allowed to take its course.

To burn down gas stations, loot and steal and rampage local business establishments won't bring Michael back, to his family or to our hurting world. I join my cousin, Elder Bernice King, CEO of the MLK Center in Atlanta, in a call for nonviolence as justice is sought for Michael Brown in St. Louis, and for a moratorium on violence all over the world. She has launched a call for 365 Days of nonviolence at .