

After Trayvon Martin Tragedy, Pastors Vow To Drive Reconciliation

I've written numerous times about the tragic death of Trayvon Martin, who was killed 2.3 miles from my office. So this is personal to me.

In the aftermath of the verdict in the trial of George Zimmerman, an amazing thing has happened. While there has been racial unrest all over the country, there has been none in the city of Sanford, Fla., where the incident occurred.

I repeat—no violence, no looting and no arson, despite the strong feelings here and the fact that violence was predicted.

I believe one of the reasons is because pastors and other Christian leaders met and prayed and formed relationships and worked together to keep the peace.

On Wednesday, I had the privilege of hosting a group of these pastors in a four-hour meeting in which we discussed these issues and talked about what's ahead. We believe Sanford still has problems and that there is deep institutional racism in our city and in the country. But we also believe something good has happened with the relationships that have been formed and the progress that has been made.

We also issued the Sanford Declaration, which you can read below.

We are now inviting you to participate in a movement across the country to get churches and pastors involved in learning to be racially sensitive and to end injustice and institutional racism wherever it exists. That's because this problem is not a political problem. It's a sin problem. It's

spiritual in nature and must be dealt with in the spiritual realm.

Please read the Sanford Declaration below and sign it, and encourage others to sign it here.

The media has taken notice of our efforts. Our meeting was on the front page of the *Orlando Sentinel* and was covered by nearly all of the local television outlets. Now we are asking leaders from around the nation to initiate meetings just like this. Leaders from Atlanta, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Denver, Colorado and Toledo, Ohio, attended to see our model and have committed to hold similar meetings in the next few weeks. We have a vision for meetings in New York, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, St. Louis, Boston, Seattle, San Francisco and many other cities where there is a similar need.

A young Sanford pastor, Derrick Gay, who was part of our April 2012 documentary, *Sanford: The Untold Story*, is leading this effort with the help of other local leaders. If you want to be a part of it, you can email him at @.

We call on Christians around the country to meet and develop statements for their own communities. We also encourage clergy and individual Christians to sign the Sanford Declaration, a covenant of racial reconciliation, relationship and Christian cultural reformation. Sign your name as supporting these principles. Together we can show the world that Christians care and that we want to deal with the spiritual roots of racism in our culture.

Special note: Can you help us in this effort for racial understanding in America? As this movement develops, there will be costs involved. We are working with our non-profit partner Christian Life Missions to make these meetings happen. We need partners to stand with us financially to cover these costs in the future.

Please send a check of any size to Christian Life Missions,

600 Rinehart Road, Lake Mary, Fla., 32746. Mark it for racial reconciliation. You can also pay by phone during business hours at , or by PayPal by clicking here.

The Sanford Declaration: A Covenant of Racial Reconciliation, Relationship, and Christian Cultural Reformation

In the aftermath of the George Zimmerman verdict, and the need to address racism as a spiritual problem, a diverse group of Christian ministers and leaders drafted the following declaration in Sanford, Florida.

Today this group of ministers and leaders stands as representatives of the gospel of Jesus Christ and His church. We see racism as a threat to the Body of Christ and our mission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19). The focus of our collective activities the next few years is to form relationships in order to end expressed racism within the church and society. By doing so, we will lead the way for the rest of our nation to rise above the crippling specter of racism in our culture. Our scriptural guideline for these activities comes from the Apostle Paul's words in Ephesians 4:15 read as follows: "Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ."

We believe that God has gifted us and millions yet to be called to minister for Him in this regard. We believe that God works in the lives of chosen men and women. Further, we believe that the Lord uses His appointed leaders to transform history. We believe that the key to ending racism in the United States and in other nations lies in Christians developing and promoting genuine relationships among each other – just as it is being done in Sanford, Florida since the spring of 2012. As a result, Sanford did not experience the rioting, looting, and violence that other regions did after the July 2013 George Zimmerman not guilty verdict. Additionally, Christians should develop intentional relationships that will result from "living life together,"

thereby manifesting in some of the following:

1. Pulpit exchanges between Church families
2. Joint leadership and family retreats.
3. Cross-cultural evangelism of other races.
4. Multi-racial church planting and development.
5. Cross-cultural home mission projects in the local metropolitan areas to assist in
 - Lifting families out of generational poverty.
 - Motivating at risk black, white, Asian, and Hispanic youths (especially males) in developing a sense of personal respect, destiny and worthwhile goals.
 - Developing minority, university scholarship programs and entrepreneurial opportunities
6. Other creative local programs that will be developed locally.
7. Lay a foundation for change with prayer and intercession.

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