

Amid Racial Tensions, Pastor Calls Church Leaders to Put 'Boots on the Ground'

In the wake of the recent murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer as well as the subsequent arrests and riots, Dr. Mike Stevens, founder and senior pastor of City Church in Huntersville, North Carolina has some strong words of advice and admonishment.

He shares these on his *Straight Talk With Dr. Mike* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. After pointing out that society needs to hold police chiefs accountable, Stevens adds, "I think the spiritual leaders need to be held accountable." With personal experience in his own area of Charlotte, North Carolina, in helping defuse riots and protests, he says, "If you are a pastor, white or black, no matter what denomination, what doctrine, what background you have, if you don't feel a call of God to stand between the dead and the living, well, my friend, you probably not you should not be pastoring.

"I think that it's enough to pray. It's enough to have an eloquent speech," Stevens says. "But after you have prayed on your bended knees, and after you've given your 'Winston Churchill moment' speech, it's time to roll up your sleeves, pull up yourselves by your bootstraps and go down to the area, the epicenter, ground zero, where conflict and turmoil is.

"You know, some of our evangelical pastors get real quiet during times like these. I call them 'virtual crickets,' Stevens says. "When no one's around, you make a whole lot of noise, a lot of podcasts, a lot of videos, a lot of YouTube sound bites, a lot of Facebook Live moments, Cash Apps and 'Fill my church, play my B-3 organ, make the money, let's have a praise the Lord time in the church.' But when tension and

turmoil hit, you're quiet; very little is said."

Stevens adds, "We need more boots on the ground: praying, marching, more proactive, preventative measures. It's not a matter of if—it's a matter of when this will happen again."

To hear more of Stevens' ideas for putting "boots on the ground" and helping achieve racial reconciliation, listen to the entire podcast here. {eo}