

Reconciled Church: 1 Thing Separates Charleston From Baltimore, Ferguson

We mourn with the families and friends of the Christian martyrs shot at the Emmanuel AME church in Charleston, South Carolina. Yet though we mourn, we celebrate the bond of Christian love that transcends race. We also declare that evil will not triumph over love, justice, and mercy. We rejoice because we see God at work against a backdrop of temporary darkness.

As some police officers in split-second decisions victimize black men, as an emotionally depraved white man disrupts a Bible class to kill nine of the people who welcomed him in—names like Ferguson, Staten Island, Baltimore and now Charleston join the roll call of an issue impossible now to ignore or explain away or hush to silence.

In one significant way, however, Charleston is not Ferguson or Baltimore or Staten Island. In Charleston, on the heels of abject wrong came seeds of forgiveness, and instead of riots and looting, blacks and whites demonstrated pain-filled solidarity. It's possible to avoid hate, and a church is showing that. Not easily, not without pain, not without mistakes but with hope that transcends what we have now. Black, white, brown, yellow; here is the value of what the church can bring.

Charleston becomes a call to all people of faith to leave our silos for a new brand of solidarity. With a comprehensive strategy of hope, we can serve the underserved and justice-deprived. On the side of righteousness, justice and freedom for all, it's possible to turn the tides on declining economics, on deprived education. In love, we can work

together to create a fair and equitable justice system in a country that stands for our highest and best ideals!

The Reconciled Church: Healing the Racial Divide is a national and nondenominational Christian movement in response to race-related violence and deaths.

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