

Sanford Pastors Unite to Take Racial Reconciliation Across Nation

Now that they've set the Sanford Declaration in motion, local **pastors** have issued a challenge to the rest of the nation to follow their lead in the pursuit of racial reconciliation.

The **pastors**, who gathered at the offices of Charisma Media in Lake Mary, Fla., Wednesday to draft the declaration—a covenant of **racial reconciliation**, relationship and Christian cultural reformation—agreed Thursday that it's now up to the church to act upon it.

The declaration comes in the wake of the tragic shooting death of 17-year-old **Trayvon Martin** in Sanford in February 2012, as well as the subsequent trial and acquittal of **George Zimmerman** nearly three weeks ago.

The covenant is the result of 15 months of relationship-building between pastors of different denominations and races. Sanford Pastors Connecting, an organization that formed shortly after the Martin shooting, spearheaded the effort and looks to spread the initiative beyond Central Florida.

"God has given grace to Sanford, and we're challenging the country to tap into this grace," Jeff Krall, senior pastor of Family Worship Center in Sanford, said at the initiative announcement on Thursday at First Shiloh Baptist Church. "Jesus said, 'Blessed are the peacemakers.' We can all receive this grace if we return to God because the grace is there, and it's available."

Eddie Tucker, a pastor from Chicago, says the fate of America's youth is on the line and that this is a major step in the right direction.

"I believe that the blood of America's youth is crying out," Tucker says. "When that happens, heaven has to respond. Our hearts go out to America's youth and, most specifically, Trayvon's family. This was a tragic, tragic thing, but the good thing that came from it was that it brought these pastors together so that this could all come about."

Touré Roberts, senior pastor of 3,000-member One Church International in Los Angeles, flew to Florida for the two-day event and says he will take the example Sanford has set and apply the principles contained in the declaration to his church and his area.

"I commend these pastors because a lot of times, we tend to take things like the **Trayvon Martin** tragedy and sweep them under the rug," he says. "These pastors have banded together and have said, 'We are still in support of what is taking place here.' It's a bit of a different dynamic in LA, but it's the same principle. I believe the model that they have put together will be a standard for the world."

Each **pastor** present at the declaration drafting signed the document. They are encouraging others to do the same. To read the entire document and to add your name and support to the list, please visit .