

This Is the Fundamental Solution to America's Moral Problems, Official Says

Mere miles away from the shot that triggered a refocus on racism in modern-day society, a small crowd gathered to determine how God's peace could reign in an age of rioting and destruction.

According to pastors, politicians and police officers, it all boils down to one thing: Faith leaders taking an active presence in their communities and being the first line of defense when chaos breaks out.

"If the moral breakdown that's at the root of that is something that we desperately need the faith-based community to inject itself into and show us leadership in bringing the flock back to the mores," says Winter Springs, Florida, Mayor Charles Lacey. "I think the establishment of a moral community is paramount to being a fundamental solution to the problem."

And given his community's response to the Trayvon Martin shooting in 2012, he's right.

Lacey's city of Winter Springs is in Seminole County, Florida, as is Sanford, where Martin was fatally shot by George Zimmerman.

Why didn't Sanford turn into similar riotous protests as Ferguson, Cleveland or Baltimore?

It was faith and the role of pastors taking an active presence in their communities, says Ed Allen, who was the incident commander during the Martin shooting and Zimmerman trial.

"Our first line of defense in the community is our pastors," Allen says. Not police, not residents, but men and women of

God who pour out their souls on behalf of their neighborhoods.

Northland, A Church Distributed Senior Pastor Joel Hunter is in complete agreement.

“It is imperative, probably more imperative than it has been for a long time, for faith leaders to take the initiative to get involved,” Hunter says.

Hunter gives two reasons for this: First, faith leaders used to be the default representation of moral voices in communities, and are no longer in that position. When these leaders are absent from the public eye, the morality of society begins to drop. Second, faith communities must prove to the younger generation that involvement is an advantage. No longer do younger generations have an automatic loyalty to these institutions. Rather, they must see the benefits beyond tradition.

When faith leaders are present, communities not only begin to feel safer, but pastors’ leadership is obvious.

“If you have an active faith community in your community, you can’t help but notice that.” Longwood, Florida, Mayor Joe Deruso says.

To return America to its godly foundation, and perhaps launch a Third Great Awakening, requires people of faith to stretch beyond their comfort zones of church auditoriums and take a proactive role in their communities.