

How a Spirit-Filled Pastor Is Changing the Hearts of Protesters

This is a very difficult time in our country. There is so much uncertainty. All of us are concerned about the death of George Floyd and support the peaceful protesters who want an end to police brutality.

Unfortunately, the peaceful protests are often hijacked by anarchists who have a Marxist worldview and have been fomenting unrest in our country in the forms of antifa and Black Lives Matter.

You can see on TV what is happening in the major cities. However, it is also coming to the suburbs, where I live.

In Lake Mary, Florida, the suburb where our office has been located for 31 years, there will be a protest on Saturday. However, Pastor Shaddy Soliman and his Lake Mary Church have been involved behind the scenes, and we are hoping to have a peaceful impact and also make a difference for Christ. When I found out about their story, I asked Pastor Shaddy if he would record a podcast to share what they did. I hope they are an example for other churches to be involved and bring the love of Jesus and calm to this very tense situation.

As you can hear on my podcast, Pastor Shaddy tells how he confronted a young man with a very left-wing agenda, who doesn't live in our area but was going to have a protest demanding an end to the police force and reparations. He tried to get Pastor Shaddy's help, but Pastor Shaddy said he could not support that agenda and said that, if necessary, he would bring hundreds to the rally to drown out the hateful rhetoric. Pastor Shaddy had already implored him to do what others did in Orlando when Orlando World Outreach Center, an Every Nation

church pastored by former NFL star Tim Johnson, organized a "Walk of Mourning and Restoration" attended by thousands. Several of the people who spoke that day were Christians, and the protest remained peaceful.

Confronted with the fact that his march might fail, this young man texted Pastor Shaddy to tell him they were moving the protest to a different part of Central Florida.

Pastor Shaddy explained to me how the protests in our area are being organized by young people he describes as "smart and very sincere." Yet he believes they are misguided. He has gotten to know a young lady who is an immigrant from Indonesia and has talked to her and her family to invite them to his church. Pastor Shaddy himself is an immigrant from Egypt and was able to relate to her on that level.

Pastor Shaddy and I talked about some of the things going on in our country and how churches should be involved. We also reminisced about the unrest that happened in Sanford, Florida, with the tragic death of Trayvon Martin in 2012. That story is told in a documentary that I helped put together called *Sanford: The Untold Story*. It highlights how Christian leaders in our area helped bring calm to a difficult situation in very different circumstances. There was no police brutality and, except for a few marches of support in various parts of the country, it did not result in the looting and violence we have seen in our country the last couple of weeks.

I'm hoping Pastor Shaddy's story on my podcast will be an encouragement to other Christian leaders who are in a dilemma about what to do. Often it is just as simple as reaching out to some of the organizers, reasoning with them and even getting involved with peaceful protests. Pastor Shaddy was able to negotiate having one of his church members open the peaceful protest in prayer and for another to be the final speaker. In this way they are able to show a kind, Christian spirit and articulate their belief that the gospel is the

answer to the racial divide that has existed in our country for a long time.

We also pray that the protests in our small suburb tomorrow (and other places around the country) will be peaceful, and these horrible events of the last several weeks will somehow result in a good outcome. As I wrote in my new book, *God, Trump and COVID-19*, there are Christian prophets who are predicting that this difficult time in American history will result in a great revival. You can check out this new book, as well as my previous books, at .

We also know that our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. The Bible also tells us that “all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).