

Pastor's Corner

July 2015 – Rev. Eric Lane

We were having a worship service at Lake Junaluska when the tragedy occurred in Charleston. While we were hearing from Bishop Ziphozihle Siwa, (Bishop of the Methodists of South Africa), not far from us, nine people attending a Bible study would be killed.

That night, our speaker spoke about how people in South Africa faced violence and danger daily and yet only 290 miles away, a group was about to experience and succumb to violence. Is this the future that we face?

If we stand with Christ, this is not what our future holds. Christ's message is one that rings loud and clear—that God's kingdom welcomes the least, the last and the lost; and that we are to love God first, and love our neighbors as ourselves. If we stand with Christ we know that justice will one day overcome injustice, love will overcome bigotry, and all forms of evil will one day come to an end.

Yes, I know for now we live in a time where there are days when it looks like evil wins; where death and sickness is all around us, and we struggle to find peace. Yet, from the ashes of death comes life, as we witnessed from the families who faced the loss of their loved ones. They confessed their pain and sorrow; they grieved the loss of their loved ones; and by the power of the Holy Spirit within them, they forgave the one who took the lives of their loved ones.

I am reminded of the time when they hung Jesus on the cross, and he drew his last breath. I expect that some watching felt that evil had won that day; others thought that they had put an end to Jesus's "Good News" message. Then, on the third day, Christ rose from the grave, giving hope to the hopeless; and, suddenly, the world was turned upside down.



So now, I am convinced even more that the world needs to hear the message that God loves them, and that through Christ we can find forgiveness and reconciliation with God the Father. And one day—maybe one day very soon—old things such as hate, bigotry, racism, sickness, violence, and even death will pass away, and there will be a "new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away..."

I cannot say what the future holds for me, for you, or for the world we live in; but I can tell you that I know the one who holds the future, and I believe in the promise that he has gone to prepare a place for those who believe in him, and that he will one day come again and take us to that place. As that old hymn goes "Oh Victory in Jesus, my savior forever..."

May God be with you!

Rev. Eric Lane