

Preparing for Ferguson

It seems odd that in Baltimore we should prepare and brace for the Grand Jury decision in Ferguson, Missouri, be we are. Officers from many jurisdictions in and around the city have put in overtime to act as a deterrent to those who would resort to violence if the decision isn't what certain people want to hear.

But the country has been here before. I wasn't alive for the rioting that occurred after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968. Notable rioting happened here, DC, Chicago, and Kansas City. Three years before that, rioting due to racial tensions lasted in Watts for six days.

Fast forward to 1991 and the country was shocked as video of the beating of Rodney King by LAPD officers after a traffic stop led to more racial unrest. When the jury acquitted the four officers the next year, there was more rioting in Los Angeles.

As we turn our focus to Ferguson, rioting due to injustice because of race or politics has, unfortunately, become the norm. That's unfortunate, and in the case of Dr. King, it's sadly ironic that such violence would follow the death of someone who stood for nonviolence.

How many of us thought there would be rioting if George Zimmerman was found "not guilty" in the Trayvon Martin case? Thankfully, that didn't happen. It was, however, within the realm of possibility. And now the country waits for another police-involved shooting tearing a city apart along racial lines.

In case you are not up to speed on the case in Ferguson, here's what you need to know: On August 9, 2014, 18 year old Michael Brown was shot and killed by Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson. Witness accounts of the fateful encounter differ from Officer Wilson's statement claiming the unarmed teen attacked him. The Grand Jury (which decides if Officer Wilson will be indicted and on what charge) has been in session since August 20th. For more on the case, see this write up from Yahoo.com.



Why am I writing about this now? Because, like many of you, I am trying to understand how violence and destroying your own community will solve what is such a complex problem. There will always be people who try to capitalize on situations like this and turn it into something racial. Honestly, I don't know enough about the case to make that call. Most of us don't. I can only intelligently comment on the peoples' response to this incident.

Riots won't bring back Michael Brown. Violence won't solve whatever problems brewing in towns like Ferguson. In this case, violence would only show us the worst

in people. Again, this doesn't solve the problem and only serves to keep people on edge and tensions high.

However we got to this place, I have to wonder if anyone really cares why these things happen. Who among protesters and activists is taking the time to find the facts and help make Ferguson better? How can the death of Michael Brown serve as an impetus for good and inspire change? That's where our energy should be - not worrying about our safety because of the foolish actions of a small percentage of people.

So, as we wait for a decision in Ferguson, let us pray for all involved and pray always for peace remembering the sanctity of all life, especially our enemies.