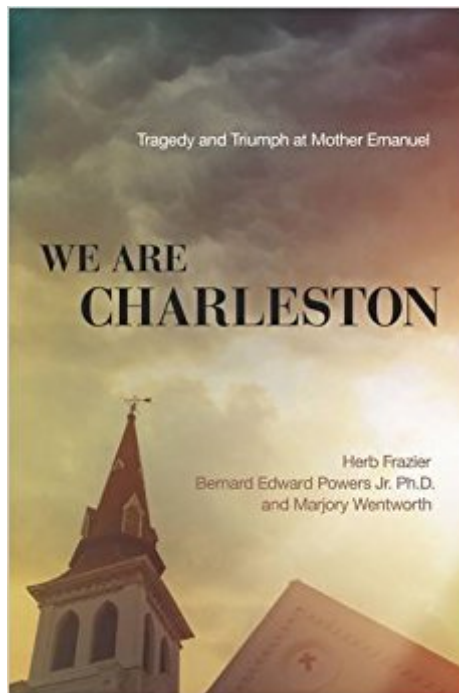




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We Are Charleston: Tragedy And Triumph At Mother Emanuel



Synopsis

On June 17, 2015, at 9:05 p.m., a young man with a handgun opened fire on a prayer meeting at the Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Charleston, South Carolina, killing nine members of the congregation. The captured shooter, twenty-one-year-old Dylan Roof, a white supremacist, was charged with their murders. Two days after the shooting, while Roof's court hearing was held on video conference, some of the families of his nine victims, one by one, appeared on the screen to forgive the killer. The "Emanuel Nine" set a profound example for their families, their city, their nation, and indeed the world. *We Are Charleston* not only recounts the events of that terrible day but also offers a history lesson that reveals a deeper look at the suffering, triumph, and even the ongoing rage of the people who formed Mother Emanuel A.M.E. church and the wider denominational movement. In many ways, this church's story is America's story—the oldest A.M.E. church in the Deep South fighting for freedom and civil rights but also fighting for grace and understanding. Fighting to transcend bigotry, fraud, hatred, racism, poverty, and misery. The shootings in June 2015, opened up a deep wound of racism that still permeates Southern institutions and remains part of American society. *We Are Charleston* tells the story of a people, continually beaten down, who seem to continually triumph over the worst of adversity. Exploring the storied history of the A.M.E. Church may be a way of explaining the price and power of forgiveness, a way of revealing God's mercy in the midst of tremendous pain. *We Are Charleston* may help us discover what can be right in a world that so often has gone wrong.

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Customer Reviews

Herb Frazier is the public relations and marketing manager for Magnolia Plantation and Gardens near Charleston, S.C. He grew up in the Ansonborough public housing projects in Charleston and at the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He has edited and reported for five daily newspapers in the South, including his hometown paper, The Post and Courier. In 1990, the South Carolina Press Association named him Journalist of the Year. Frazier studied journalism at the University of South Carolina and taught newswriting as a visiting lecturer at Rhodes University in South Africa. He is a former Michigan Journalism Fellow at the University of Michigan. Marjory Wentworth is a Pushcart Prize-nominated poet who has worked extensively in human rights for organizations such as the UN High Commission for Refugees in Geneva, Switzerland; The Whole World Institute of Boston; and Church World Service in New York. She is the co-author of "Taking a Stand". She lives in Charleston, South Carolina. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Very I formative about details and feelings of all involved

Knowing Charleston's history helped put current events in context.

Historic and current information surrounding Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston SC

The shootings at Charleston's Mother Emanuel AME Church last summer shocked the nation and the world. And then came a moment even greater: When family members of several of the victims, given the opportunity to say a few words to the accused gunman, offered forgiveness. To a nation accustomed to anger and vindictiveness, forgiveness came unexpectedly. It was counterintuitive. It made many of us wonder whether in the same circumstances we could have offered the gunman, or anyone, forgiveness. What "We Are Charleston" does so well is explain why the members of the Mother Emanuel AME Church were able to utter those words of forgiveness. It's a story, told in beautifully written prose, that starts with the establishment of slavery in South Carolina and takes the reader through the Civil War, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Movement and the present day. It describes the founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Churches throughout the South, and the role they have played in holding together the black community and leading its

members to equal rights. All three of these authors are Charlestonians, and from their bios are clearly insiders in the city and even in the AME church. This is what we need more of in today's world--an explanation of the why.

We Are Charleston: Tragedy and Triumph at Mother Emanuel is an important book. Frazier, Powers, and Wentworth give us history, journalism, and poetry in a narrative that reminds us that while there might be no consolation for what happened in Charleston a year ago, there is the need and the responsibility and the opportunity for education and empathy and compassion. And, that's what the book does so beautifully. I am learning so much that I needed to know to understand the moral and historical elegance of the history of the Mother Emanuel Church and of the elegance lost in the lives of the victims of June '15. The book reminds us that decay and rot begin in received ideas and unquestioned thought and that Charleston is Orlando and Sandy Hook and San Bernardino and all the places and people who are imperiled by bias and hatred and inflexibility of thought and belief. I want this book to be read and reread all over the world.

We Are Charleston: Tragedy and Triumph at Mother Emanuel tells the side of the story I've been waiting for. It is intimate, as only those in the Community can tell the story. No outsiders looking in. The authors weave Charleston history, AME history and biographies of the murdered together with recent and present politics to prove how little of substance has changed here in the year since the massacre. The narrative timeline of what occurred on and since June 17, 2016 reminds us how small this city really is. We know people who know the victims. People we love are still aching with sadness. We're taken back to that night at Marion Square where so many gathered, where the bad news was spread by friends and relatives on Calhoun Street. Stunned bewilderment. This book clearly lays out the history of Emanuel AME church and the immediate neighborhood. The historic losses are laid out too. Did the families of Denmark Vesey and his friends grieve like this? What heights of courage did it take for the congregation to rebuild from the ruins of their church in 1822? How many generations passed before the grief subsided? Buy this well crafted book. Get to know Charleston better. THIS is our Charleston.

I live here in Charleston and let me say that this is awesome. I am born and raised here and I feel the pain caused here daily. I am proud to be from Charleston and I do realize how much hate that is out there. I am white, male, retired marine and don't see color, only love. We are one. Period...

Charleston, South Carolina is my adopted home town, and I was crushed when on June 17, 2015, Dylann Roof walked into a Bible study at Mother Emanuel AME Church. After sitting with the group for over an hour, he then pulled out a gun and opened fire, killing nine of these gentle people. Just in time for the first anniversary of the shooting, *We Are Charleston* was published, written by Herb Frazier, Bernard Edward Powers, Jr., and Marjory Wentworth. This moving book is informative, extremely disturbing and yet ultimately hopeful. But it also pulls no punches in detailing Charleston's shameful history in race relations. The authors attempt to use the tragedy that occurred in Charleston as a way to explore the racialized history of the city and our nation that made such a crime possible. The three authors include a journalist (Frazier), a college history professor (Powers) and the poet laureate of South Carolina (Wentworth). *We Are Charleston* obviously describes the events of that horrible night, but it also honors the victims. It was amazing to read their life stories and how much these individuals made of their lives. Many even had advanced degrees. But unfortunately, "Racist attitudes rooted in the dark past have sometimes been preserved in the present" and Dylann Roof is a prime example of this. The authors cover such topics as slavery, slave rebellions, freedom, Jim Crow, Civil Rights, and the fight to remove the Confederate flag from the South Carolina Statehouse after the tragedy. There is also much about the history of the African Methodist Church. Mother Emanuel has a rich, long history in Charleston with its roots dating back to Richard Allen of Philadelphia. There is much to learn in *We Are Charleston*. What makes this story a story of hope is that when Dylann Roof was apprehended soon after the shooting, the families of the victims told him they forgave him at the Roof's initial court appearance. Instead of encouraging anger, protesting and rioting in the streets of Charleston, these family members were an example to those of faith. The church was even nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Yet, Mother Emanuel is still dealing with issues caused by the shooting including questions about monetary donations made after shootings, victims and families who feel that the church leadership has abandoned them, and parishioners who are unhappy that their church has become a tourist destination and place of pilgrimage. Even after this book was published, the new pastor who was just appointed in January, Betty Deas Clark, was reassigned. Despite the hope after the Charleston shooting, there still is much to be done in Mother Emanuel AME Church, as well as much we can do to combat racism not just in Charleston, but in our country as a whole.

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