

BOOK REVIEW

Broad book covers Charleston Massacre and racial divide

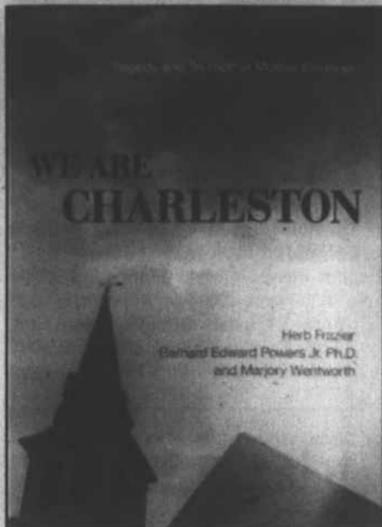
BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER FOR THE CHRONICLE

The Word is what you crave. It's where you find your comfort, strength, the peace you need to get through the day. Reading it is like hearing God's voice; studying it is feeling His power; and in the new book, "We Are Charleston," by Herb Frazier, Bernard Edward Powers Jr., PhD, and Marjory Wentworth, knowing it could mean offering forgiveness.

There are, say the authors, two Charlestons in South Carolina.

Tourists see lovely horse-drawn carriages, fine dining, and historic homes. But there's a flip-side Charleston, too. It's where slavery began, where Jim Crow laws once ruled, and where racism is still an issue. That's where Mother Emanuel AME Church has stood for generations, welcoming people of faith.

Wednesdays are Bible study nights at Mother Emanuel, although on June 17, 2015, that was pushed back a bit for a business meeting. By 8 o'clock, however,



"a dozen of the most devout parishioners" were ready for the Word of God. Exactly sixteen minutes later, "a skin-



Photo by Jack Alterman
Bernard Edward Powers Jr., PhD, left; Marjory Wentworth; and Herb Frazier wrote "We Are Charleston."

ny young white man" entered the door and joined the group, sitting next to the church's pastor. The young man was a stranger there, but they welcomed him just the same. And after prayerful fellowship and Bible study, "as eyes were closed and heads were bowed" for a final benediction, he took out a gun and started shooting.

But why did Dylann Roof scream racial sentiments, reload his gun five times, and kill nine strangers in a house of God? The answer, say the authors, lies in the past, aboard slave ships, on wharfs where people were once sold, and on a flag. It goes back some 200 years, to another time when that church was a "target of hate." And yes, it lies in the story of a "young man who purchased a weapon to kill human beings."

But surprisingly, what resulted from that night more than a year ago wasn't just a history lesson. It wasn't merely grief, either. What happened in the days after that night was forgiveness, over and over ...

There is, of course, more to this story-

than just what happened in June 2015 in South Carolina - and that's where I struggled with "We Are Charleston." There's too much inside this book, and it veers too much off course.

I see where the authors are trying to take readers: the book's opening and ending are about the shooting and aftermath, while the middle part consists of African-American history and that of the AME church, with an attempt to tie them together. These subjects are very interesting, but the tie here is too broad and too deep. I'd have been happier with two different books.

And yet, it's easy to brush aside book-gripes when presented with a powerful message like the one you'll see; specifically, one of forgiveness, strength, and forward movement. That alone left me satisfied after all.

"We Are Charleston" by Herb Frazier, Bernard Edward Powers Jr., PhD, and Marjory Wentworth
\$24.99
256 pages

Second Harvest Food Bank's Chuck Harmon goes the extra mile

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

On a day when many of us gathered with family and neighbors around tables piled high with food in celebration of the July 4th holiday, Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC's Chuck Harmon set off on a 250-mile-long "Hike to End Summer Hunger." Harmon trained for several weeks at walk events hosted by school groups, apartment communities, local businesses and others. Along the way, Harmon collected thousands of pounds of

food and thousands of dollars to support Second Harvest Food Bank and its partners working to fill the summer meal gap for kids. And he's just getting started.

Harmon set a goal to raise \$3 from 100,000 people. He wants community members to know that their gifts of any size to support his efforts will be put to use immediately to help local children.

With school out for summer, Second Harvest Food Bank and its partner food assistance agencies are working to make sure that local kids have the

food they need to enjoy their summer break and start back to school in the fall ready to learn.

"During the school year, thousands of children in our area can rely on free or reduced priced school meals to help them stay focused on learning, but the summer months are a different story," explains Harmon, who serves as the Food Drive and Retail Donor Relations Manager for Second Harvest Food Bank. "I remember what those school meals meant to me as a kid, and I remember the generosity of neighbors when those

meals weren't available. Now, I'm the guy at Second Harvest Food Bank who is always asking folks to go the extra mile to help families in our community. This July, I aim to "walk my talk." I'm going to go the extra mile, and I am going to ask others to do the same, knowing that each and every gift of support will make a difference to a child in need."

Harmon's month-long journey along the North Carolina Mountains to Sea trail spans the width of Second Harvest Food Bank's 18-county service area, beginning at Mile

Post 290.3 on the Blue Ridge Parkway in Watauga County and concluding at Burlington's City Park in Alamance County. Harmon is walking a minimum of 15 miles each day to honor 15 years of partnership and feeding community with WXII 12 News. The news outlet is covering Harmon's journey throughout the month of July and hosting community donation events on Wednesday, July 20, at Ingles Shopping Center, Main Street, Walnut Cove, and Wednesday, July 27, at Speas Elementary School, Polo Road, Winston-Salem

Throughout July, community members will be able to follow Harmon's journey by tuning in to WXII 12 News broadcasts and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Summermealsmatter/>.

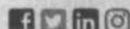
Donations to support Harmon and Second Harvest Food Bank's efforts to provide summer meals for kids can be made online at hungernwnc.org or mailed to Second Harvest Food Bank at 3655 Reed Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27107.

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