

3 Spiritual Failures Exposed by the Capitol Riots

On Wednesday, rioters vandalized the U.S. Capitol building and caused mayhem that left five people dead, including Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick. These sickening scenes of destruction did not come out of the blue. They grew out of cascading spiritual failures rippling through the government, the culture and the church.

They are:

1. The Failure of Government

How could rioters breach the U.S. Capitol building, the sanctuary of our republic?

According to Rep. Tim Ryan, D-Ohio, “enormous strategic and planning failures” by multiple police forces under several layers of government contributed to the breach.

Ryan, who chairs the panel responsible for funding the Capitol Police, said that the D.C. Metropolitan Police—who are under the leadership of the local D.C. government—were supposed to join Capitol Police, the D.C. National Guard and SWAT teams to make sure the protesters would not be “anywhere near the Capitol.”

Instead, the Capitol Police found themselves alone and overwhelmed. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Thursday that the riots “represented a massive failure of institutions, protocols and planning that are supposed to protect the first branch of our federal government.”

Anyone angry over the disparity between how the National Guard responded to the MAGA crowd compared to Black Lives Matter protesters, or puzzled why law enforcement didn’t collect

background intelligence on the crowd, can thank Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser.

Bowser insisted the government deploy only 114 National Guard members at a time and ordered, "No DCNG personnel shall be armed during this mission, and at no time will DCNG personnel or assets be engaged in domestic surveillance."

Instead, guardsmen were mostly restricted to overseeing traffic at the city's Metro subway stations. "Under these authorities, the Guard was essentially acting like traffic cops," one defense official told *Time* magazine. Incredibly, Bowser said her response was proof that "we must get statehood."

Washington's local government made it even harder to stop furry-hatted invaders from storming the walls of a soon-to-be fully Democratic-controlled Congress. Is this really the territory progressive Democrats want to make the 51st state?

Why should the district have a greater voice in ruling over all U.S. citizens when it cannot furnish the most basic government functions to its own? The District of Columbia's abysmal performance in safeguarding the seat of our government discredits any push to grant it statehood.

2. The Failure of Our Culture

Politicians have normalized, even celebrated, political violence. Partisan hatred—which already burned intensely long before the 2016 election—exploded into depicting President Donald J. Trump's assassination and beheading, glorifying mass arson and looting as "reparations," and intimidating a helpless couple who refused to follow a crazed mob. This list of politicians mainstreaming the verbal or physical assault of their opponents is a depressing overview of how we got here.

3. The Failure of Faith

For the first time in modern history, massive political violence has been bipartisan. Early claims that facial recognition software identified antifa protesters proved mistaken. Although it did find neo-Nazi members of the alt-right, Congressman Chris Stewart of Utah told Glenn Beck on Thursday that the vandals he saw “were just kind of normal people, but they got carried away.”

Some of those who stormed the U.S. Capitol undoubtedly consider themselves Christians. But the Bible says that believers who refuse to be subject to lawful authorities resist God (Rom. 13:1-7) and commit a sin comparable to witchcraft (1 Sam. 15:23).

The fact that Christians are willing to commit property damage shows how tight a grip “the mystery of lawlessness,” which Pastor Phil Hotsenpiller has been writing about for years, has even over people of faith.

Make no mistake: Obedience to secular authorities is never absolute. Christians must disobey laws forcing them to compromise their faith or morality. When Christians have no alternative but to choose between God or government, they choose God’s law (Dan. 6:10-17 and Acts 5:29).

But then, like Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., they willingly suffer the penalty. “Unearned suffering is redemptive,” King said, because God’s grace let us “transform the suffering into a creative force.”

Christianity has always brought redemption out of righteous suffering. Jesus turned death into eternal life.

The early martyrs’ executions gave such a powerful testimony that the second-century writer Tertullian said, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”

The blood spilled at the U.S Capitol on Wednesday will only sow our social disintegration. Now that we know how we got to

this point, Christians must refuse to be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2), so non-believers will look at our actions and say that “where sin abounded, grace abounded much more” (Rom. 5:20b).
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