

Don't Give Up on America, Church

Last week, three of us from our team at Christians Engaged traveled to Louisiana for a few days to work with our evangelism partners, Time to Revive. Because of over a year's worth of work by these faithful evangelists, we saw 11 churches come together across denominational and racial lines for the purpose of sharing the gospel. Every morning hungry believers from those churches and others came together for prayer, worship and training, and then split up into groups of three or four to share the gospel for five days.

The Pulpit Swap in Louisiana

Meeting and worshipping together in the evenings, those involved were deeply impacted by the teaching of Kyle Lance Martin. A deep work was happening in the region as these spiritually hungry pastors and leaders joined together, laying aside their differences and building on their pulpit swap the Sunday before. (They switched churches for the purpose of showing their unity—the pastor of a small, Black, 40-member church preached at the megachurch in town for their morning services, and the white suburban Baptist pastor preached at the inner city's spirited Black church.)

'How Can I Pray for You?'

On one of the days we were there, I got to lead a man named Clinton through the gospel using a colored wristband and Bible during his 20-minute break from working at the grocery store. His humility to hear and read the Scriptures with me after a long journey through rehab touched my heart deeply. One of our staff members witnessed several people be healed at a restaurant with their group, as the waitress went back to tell her father, the manager and other employees what God had

done—similar to the “woman at the well” whom Jesus encountered in John 4. Believers at the grocery stores, gas stations and local businesses around Central Louisiana (Pinesville, Alexandria and Ball) were encouraged as other Christians went up to them all over town with a simple question: *How can I pray for you?*

Don't Give Up on the Church

On the fourth night of meetings, as Kyle was teaching, he made a statement that I knew was for our team: *Don't give up on the church*. It struck me that many of us are seeing what is happening in our nation and want to empower the church to get involved (this is what we do every day at Christians Engaged), but we get frustrated when we don't see much movement. I am not just talking about civic engagement, but even engagement in what is supposed to be the main function of the local church—to bring the gospel to the lost. We rejoiced in the 11 churches that said “Yes” to joining together to share the gospel with us, but where were the other hundreds of churches from the area?

Don't Give Up on America!

After decades of crying out to God for the body of Christ to be set on fire and come into renewal, after yearning for the simple expression of Christianity—loving Jesus—in the modern American church, after believing for God to bring another Great Awakening to America—these simple words made hope spring up in my heart.

Where Is the Hunger in America?

As I talk to other ministers, many say the same things: There is no hunger in America. They will say things like, “No one cares about what I have to give here.” “I have given up on this place—I am going to the nations.”

When we see believers walking for hours to get to a meeting in

Africa, crying out in praise and repentance, or when we see new disciples sit for hours on the floor, yearning to be fed the Scriptures in China, or when we see the quick distribution of simple Bible-teaching materials in Romania, we wonder—*Where is the hunger like this in our nation?*

It is easy for American-based ministries to get so frustrated with America that we just go to the nations and forget the work here. But with those simple words—DON'T GIVE UP ON AMERICA—I felt a shift in my own heart and will be praying that same shift happens for our nation's spiritual leaders.

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They Don't Know the Gospel

As I share the gospel in America with Time to Revive and at other times in my normal life, it is shocking to me how many people have never heard the simple message of Romans 6:23 (NIV): "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord." Or Romans 5:8 (ESV): "God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Almost every time I read these Scriptures on the streets, the people have never heard them before.

Friends, this is the situation in America—in our own backyards and cities.

After a few minutes of meditation on Kyle's words (I was listening to that specific message a day later in my car on my way home from ministering in Oklahoma), I heard a word in my heart almost as loud as an audible voice: DON'T GIVE UP ON AMERICA! The words were thundering. I wrote them down just as I was hearing them, in all caps. I couldn't shake them. This was a word from the Lord for me, for our team and also for our friends who share the gospel every day around this nation.

I can't describe the hope those simple words gave my soul. It was like water in a desert land.

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Missionary to America

After years of feeling called as a missionary and preparing to live in a foreign nation, I experienced God's call to be a missionary to America. This calling hasn't looked like a normal call many days, as I have spent my career building small businesses with my husband and then working for over 16 years in politics and government. My story is that I have walked with members of Congress and state officials, but each of us has a specific sphere of influence. We are moms in our community, deacons or volunteers in our local churches, teachers in our schools or small business owners. Any of us can mentor a young person who doesn't have a father or mother as a stabilizing force, love on our police and firefighters by dropping off plates of cookies or go out for an hour to just pray for people. God has called us to make disciples and to inspire others to know Jesus. God wants to speak through us and use us for His glory, to call others to Himself through love and truth.

"For with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37, NKJV).

"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" (John 4:35).

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"Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest'" (Matt. 9:37-38).

Don't Give Up!

Don't give up on America, church!

When we turn our thoughts, our eyes and our prayers to the lost people right in our sphere of influence, then we will see God move in and through us.

Don't give up on your family.

Don't give up on your friends.

Don't give up on your church.

Don't give up on spiritual revival happening in your community.

Don't give up believing that we will see the American church yearn for God.

My daily prayer is this: "God, let me be so hungry for You that it causes others around me to desire You like never before."

God never gives up on you and me, and He won't give up on this land.{eoa}

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nationally on Feb. 6. Read all the endorsements and pre-order it now.