

Pray Like Your Life Depends on It

I have friends overseas who are worried about the United States. When people I know from Uganda or India see news reports of stores being looted in Chicago and cars burning in Portland, they assume I live a few miles from the violence. I explain that America is a big country, and that these riots aren't happening in my city.

Christians in other countries have always considered the United States a "Christian nation" because we have so many churches and we send many missionaries to the world. Now they hear of police killing unarmed Black people. They see anarchists setting government buildings on fire. They hear politicians defending abortions up to the point of birth.

"I am very worried," a pastor from eastern Nigeria told me this week. He says he views what is happening in the United States today as "an attempt by hell to divide the church along political lines in order to bring about a satanic strategy for America."

One pastor of a megachurch in Singapore told me: "We are horrified by what is happening in the United States. It is painful to see anarchy and lawlessness so rampant. We are praying constantly for America."

One of my pastor friends from Uganda says he is praying for a healing of divisions in our nation. "The devil fights the hardest when he knows we are making a difference. He laughs at the evil, riots and violence. But we say, 'No more.' We are asking God to turn His people back to Him."

Another Singapore pastor told me that he feels "destructive forces" are at work in America right now: "America is a great country, but it is now at a tipping point. If you are not

careful it will fall over a cliff. Christians must no longer keep silent.”

I am constantly pleading with my international friends to pray for my country. The alarm has sounded. When they ask me how I am praying, I share this list below—which I am constantly updating. I hope you will share it with your praying friends, whether they are from the United States or abroad:

1. **Pray that the COVID-19 pandemic will end.** If God can heal the sick miraculously, He can end a plague. Pray that the coronavirus will stop spreading so people can go back to work, kids can return to school and churches can meet again. And remember that this pandemic is having much more devastating impact on developing countries.
2. **Pray for an end to riots and violence.** The peaceful protests that began in May to honor George Floyd have morphed into something unrecognizable. Predominantly white anarchists have hijacked a movement. Portland, Seattle, Denver, New York, Chicago and Kenosha, Wisconsin, have all suffered irreparable damage from lootings, shootings and arson. In Chicago, where I visited last weekend, business owners are leaving the city because they feel unprotected. Pray for peace.
3. **Pray for a peaceful election on Nov. 3.** People are on edge these days because of fears of voter fraud. And there are rumors that violence will break out if the election doesn't turn out the way certain groups want. Pray for fairness and accurate ballot counts—and no rioting.
4. **Pray for leaders who have character, moral values, courage and wise policies.** We are a sharply divided country, and your definition of “moral values” might differ from mine. But I hope all Christians can agree that we need leaders who have respect for God's

standards. Pray for voters to select the best candidates to lead our country—and keep in mind that the 2020 election is not just a contest between President Trump and Joe Biden. We will also choose 35 U.S. senators and 96 members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

5. **Pray for racial justice.** We cannot ignore the fact that people of color have suffered in this country because of discrimination and racist attitudes. Pray for a true change in people's hearts, keeping in mind that racist attitudes have also affected immigrants as well as Native Americans.
6. **Pray for reconciliation and an end to hatred and division.** I don't remember a season in my lifetime when Americans were this hateful. Whether we are feuding on social media, arguing on TV talk shows, shouting profanity at each other in the streets or throwing bricks at crowds, many people have become ticking time bombs. Pray that God will defuse this hostility.
7. **Pray for freedom to preach the gospel.** Currently Christians in some states are enduring suffocating restrictions on gatherings because of COVID-19. But I am more concerned about the restrictions that may come in the future if government leaders begin telling the church what we can and can't say from a pulpit or online. Pray that our religious freedoms will be safeguarded.
8. **Pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.** Ultimately, our nation is sunk if we continue on a path toward atheism and godless humanism. If America turns totally away from God, we will drift so far morally that we will fall off the cliff, as my friend in Singapore warned. But an election is not going to save us. A political party cannot save us. We need the rain of heaven. Our ultimate prayer must be, "Lord, send a revival." {eoas}