

Dear Friends of Global Orphans,

June 2020

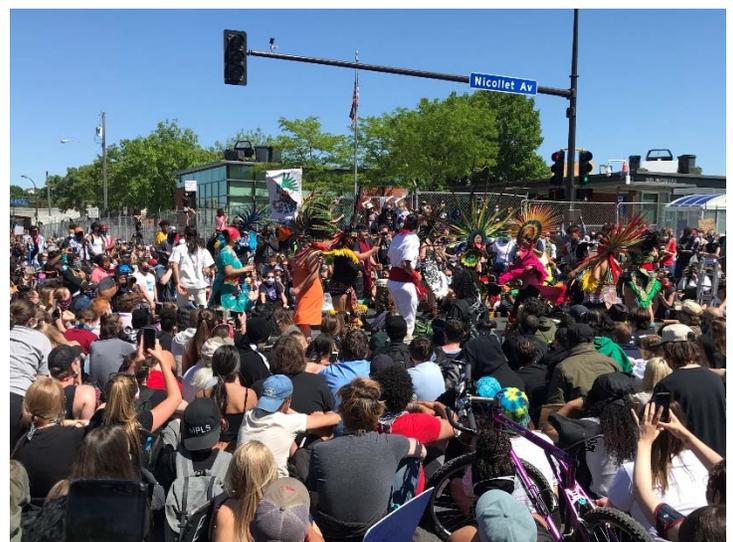
Something has broken inside of me. I'm not sure if it's because this situation happened in my city, or if it's because the riots and burnings happened one block from my daughter's house and four blocks from some of our closest friends.

After the worst night of riots, burning and looting, I was on a conference zoom call with a state senator, two dozen pastors and a couple of Twin Cities trauma therapists. There were collective cries for peace and revival to come to our city and our nation. The next day was the celebration of Pentecost in our churches, so it made sense. The collective cry was, "Lord do it again!" The hearts of those present were beautiful and sincere. Yet, I felt we were making a tragic mistake. The implication was that the rioters and protesters would repent and know the glory of God's salvation. Prayers for them to come flocking to our churches out of their desperation were lifted up. Power for pastors as they proclaimed the gospel the next day were voiced. Truly, these are wonderful things to pray for.

Nevertheless, Isaiah 58 and 59 kept ringing in my head. ***"Shout aloud to My people. Do not be timid. Tell them of their sins. They come to the [church] so frequently and seem delighted to learn all about Me. They act so pious. They act like a righteous nation that would never abandon My laws. They ask Me to take action on their part, pretending they want to be near Me...This is the kind of fasting that I want. Free those who are wrongly imprisoned...remove the chains that bind people. Share your food with the hungry and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them and do not hide from relatives who need your help. THEN WHEN YOU CALL, THE LORD WILL ANSWER. 'YES, I AM HERE.' HE WILL QUICKLY REPLY....But because of YOUR sins He has turned away and will not listen anymore....The LORD looked and was displeased to find there was no justice. He was amazed to see that no one intervened to help the oppressed."*** I wanted to scream at the top of my lungs to everyone on the call, "I DON'T THINK HE IS LISTENING TO US!"

Before this is dismissed as being Old Testament, it is good to remember that the character of our God is the same yesterday, today and forever. His covenant with us, His New Testament Church, is different. But His heart and character remain the same. One of my life verses is Jeremiah 9:23, "Let him who boasts, boast of this, that he truly knows and understands Me, that I am the Lord who exercises unflinching love and brings justice and righteousness **to the earth** [not just in heaven] because I delight in these things." **How does He do this?** His desire has always been to execute His character through His covenant people. If this is not happening in our nation, it is our fault!

Mark and I went into Minneapolis to partake of the protests. My reasons were twofold. I wanted to be present with those who were suffering, to somehow show compassion and comfort as the hands and feet of Jesus. Secondly, I wanted to join in their demand for justice in this situation and the reform of our overall justice system. Relationships with African Americans in recent years have caused me to better understand their experience of America and take a hard look at the reality of our social systems. Ashamed to admit it, I didn't pay enough attention until it hit closer to home.



Being present at the protests was sobering. They were peaceful, despite the palpable anger and grief in the air. I looked around at the charred bank and post office with smoke still smoldering. A local pharmacy present in the community for over 100 years was now a pile of rubble. On top of an adjacent building were police officers poised in riot gear pointing down on us with tear gas guns ready. A dance of mourning was being led by a group of Native Americans. The crowd was racially diverse, but monolithic in age. Out of the several thousand protesters, most everyone was younger than 30 years. I did not witness a dozen even close to our age. I wondered, "**Where are the elders?**" Also absent was any expression of the church. The protesters were wandering in circles with signs of despair, grief, and anger. No one seemed to be leading. No one seemed to have any direction or answers. Present and recruiting with fliers in this void was the anarchist group, Antifa.

Pentecost has passed. To my knowledge, there have been no breakouts of revival, no angelic visitations, or healings. Friends, these are perilous days. We must do more than pray for revival. We must work for it. And that starts with repentance, our own repentance. I have heard many from suburban churches express a variation of the sentiment, "Thankfully, that is downtown and not in my neighborhood," or "It is their own fault."

***"The LORD looked and was displeased to find there was no justice. He was amazed to see that no one intervened to help the oppressed."*** And if you prefer the Lord's New Testament heart: "I know all the things you do and that you have a reputation for being alive, but you are dead. Wake up!...I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference (Rev. 3). "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sins and restore their land" (2 Chronicle 7:14). For my part, I have more to repent of than just my indifference toward injustice in this land.

I don't think we need to abandon our mission trips to Haiti or Mexico, but I think we certainly need to add our neighbors to our mission's agenda. The Lord is giving me some ideas of how to utilize all my training and experience to this end. I'm asking for His guidance and favor. More on this later.

Forgive me for venting. I felt compelled, lest we wake up one day to find we no longer live in the country in which we were raised. It happened in 1917 Russia and in 1933 Germany. If one day we ask, "When and how did this happen?" The Lord will reply, "While you were sleeping!"

For Repentance & Revival,



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