

## **“REACHING TODAY’S AMERICA FOR CHRIST” SERIES**

### **#1: “This Is Not Your Father’s America!”**

**SCRIPTURE:** Acts 17:16-21

#### **INTRO:**

Ken Ham, of the Answers in Genesis organization, wrote in his book, *Gospel Reset*:

“Billy Graham passed away February 21, 2018. Many news items reported on his death and paid tribute to this great evangelist. One headline really stood out to me:

*There will never be another Billy Graham,  
because the world that made him possible  
is gone.*

“This was similar to what Fox News political commentator Tucker Carlson stated during his short tribute to Billy Graham on *Tucker Carlson Tonight*, February 21, 2018:

‘He basically just preached the Bible. In the America of the time, that was enough. People stopped him on the street to shake his hand. We live in a different country now, but Billy Graham never changed.’

“Yes, the world has changed; we do ‘live in a different country’ now, and another Billy Graham would not have the same response as the late Billy Graham the evangelist had.

“The gospel message hasn’t changed, but the way in which it needs to be presented in a secularized culture does need to change. The way to present the gospel does need to be reset in the world we now live in” (pp. 9-10).

Peter’s sermon to the Jews in Acts 2 was to a world that was more like your father’s world than today’s world. Everyone in his audience believed in God and was looking for a Messiah. He merely pointed out to them rather convincingly that Jesus was that Messiah, and that they needed to repent and be baptized. 3,000 believed him and did just that.

Paul’s sermon in Athens to the Greeks in Acts 17 was to a world more like today’s world. Luke wrote in verses 16 through 21: *<sup>16</sup>Now while Paul was waiting for them (Silas and Timothy) at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw the city was full of idols. <sup>17</sup>So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those*

*who happened to be there. <sup>18</sup>Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babbling wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities" – because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. <sup>19</sup>And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? <sup>20</sup>For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean." <sup>21</sup>Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.*

Much like Athens,

### ***THE WORLD WE NOW LIVE IN IS THE WORLD OF SECULARISM.***

America's God is no longer Jehovah; like Athens, today's America has many gods. Like Athens, today's America is religious, but in a secular sense. In secular societies, the gods are science and education. In secular societies, the worldview is atheistic and evolutionistic. In secular societies, Christianity is ultimately targeted for annihilation.

While the secularization of America has been going on for many years, the America of your father was quite different from that of today. In your lifetime, you've seen the de-Christianization of America's institutions and government schools. Prayer and Bibles have been eliminated from government-controlled and financed schools. A ridiculous interpretation of the so-called "separation of church and state" clause in the Bill of Rights has been pushed and promoted to the point that our founding fathers wouldn't even recognize it.

What's happening flies into the face of the biblical quotes and references to God in our historical documents and on our government buildings, coins and currency.

Furthermore,

### ***THE WORLD WE NOW LIVE IN IS THE WORLD OF THE MILLENNIALS.***

We have given the various generations descriptive names:

- We of the older generation have been dubbed the "Builders";
- Our children have been called the "Baby Boomers";
- Then come the "Gen-Xers";
- Today's younger generation have been dubbed "Millennials."

The "Millennials" are, by and large, the products of America's secularistic society. For the most part, they've been educated in the government's atheistic evolutionistic schools, where there are fewer and fewer "Builder" teachers and

professors. They have been taught and influenced to a great degree by liberal, progressive “Boomers” and older “Millennials.” As a result, their world view, their moral standards, and their political views tend to be less like the “Builders” and more like the “Boomers” and older “Millennials.”

Most “Millennials” have no idea what it’s like not to have computers, tablets and cell phones. They don’t remember when America won a war or when there was an East and West Berlin. They’ve never seen socialism in action and the terrible things that result from it. They don’t understand what the Electoral College is and why the founding fathers established it. The concept of the Christian-Judeo foundation of America is foreign to them.

Even though they may have attended church and Sunday School with their parents, over half of them no longer attend. By the time they reach college age, two-thirds of them no longer have anything to do with church. Of the “Millennials” who were church attenders, 40% said they were not “born again” believers. 40% said they thought gay couples should be allowed to marry. 50% were not opposed to gay marriage.

When it comes to belief in the Bible as the Word of God, “Millennials” are, by and large, weak in this area. Why? Because their parents and the church have not grounded them in the faith. When they go off to college, what little grounding they have had is no match for the college atmosphere, both that of the student body and the college faculty. They are taught that much of the Bible is a myth. They are taught to worship the gods of science and education, both of which, they are taught, prove the foolishness of religion and the mythological nature of the Bible.

***ALL THIS PRESENTS QUITE A CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIANITY AND PROBLEMS FOR THE CHURCH.***

Again, Ken Ham has written:

“If you ask the average churchgoing Christian today, ‘Considering what’s happening in the culture, what do we need to do?’ most will respond, ‘Well, we just need to go out and proclaim the gospel.’ But exactly what do they mean by ‘the gospel?’ Many Christians today fail to fully understand the gospel, and therefore are unable to share it effectively. I believe this is due to a foundation problem” (*Gospel Reset*, p. 37).

If our grandchildren and great grandchildren are the church of tomorrow, and most of them don’t have the faith that we have, how is it that there’s going to be a church tomorrow? In other words, if most of them don’t see any importance or relevance to the church, how is the church to survive?

Ken Ham says that we must stop assuming that people know what the gospel is and that the words, ***“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”*** mean something to them. In Billy Graham’s heyday they did, but today that’s not necessarily true. “Millennials” don’t necessarily know what “sin” is, not in the true biblical sense, and they don’t necessarily know which “god” is being referred to. To understand the God of Christianity, one has to first understand the God of the Old Testament – the Creator and Judge of the universe. Ham says that parents and the church need to go back to the beginnings in Genesis and build the proper foundation in the minds of today’s children.

## **CONCLUSION:**

I’ll admit that this seems to be a rather grim picture of what’s ahead for the church and Christianity. We need to be assured, though, that God is still on the throne, still in control, and that the gospel is still as powerful as ever. What we must understand, however, is that the way we present the gospel must change. As I said at the beginning, this is not your father’s America. Crusades like those of Billy Graham don’t cut it anymore. The key to evangelism today is a church and parents that build a foundation of faith in our children and a system of networking that builds relationships that lead to winning friends to Christ.

While I understand that you and I are not really in a position to do much about the problem I’ve described, maybe my calling it to your attention will motivate you to pray and somehow influence your children and grandchildren in such a way that they might “right the ship” so to speak. I believe it’s important that America return to its roots in a Judeo-Christian worldview – to what motivated George Washington to end his oath of office with “So help me God” and what motivated us to put “In God We Trust” on our coins and currency, to say “one nation *under God*” in our Pledge of Allegiance, to have a chaplain to offer a prayer to God before each session of each chamber of Congress, and to express our belief in the Creator God of the Bible in hundreds of other ways.