

Billy Graham: The National Crisis

Editor's Note: *In December of 1973, Billy Graham delivered a written message in Decision magazine entitled "The National Crisis." Despite being published nearly four decades ago, the message contained in the excerpts below (edited for length) speak to the age-old problems plaguing the earth since the fall of man. And, the answer remains the same: Jesus Christ.*

This past year the American people have suffered an emotional trauma that has had few parallels in our history.

Our newspapers and our television screens are bringing news of a hundred and one dangerous problems that are rocking the world. Each day seems to add to our already impressive number of crises here at home – an accelerating crime rate, mass murders, soaring drug use, rampant inflation, pollution, the breakdown of families, a jittery stock market – and the list could go on and on.

And the question that many Americans are asking is: What went wrong? What is wrong?

It is almost a paradox that our nation, with all the economic affluence for enjoying life, virtually leads the world in crime, narcotics abuse and immorality. As Americans we have at our beck and call all the necessary armaments for national security, but we are still insecure. We have all the material possessions deemed essential for happiness, but we are unhappy. Science has brought us close to a material paradise, but we also stand on the precipice of hell itself. Millions of Americans are happy on the outside, but deep down inside they know something is missing: they are lonely, empty and bored.

The supreme crisis that confronts us is neither political nor economic. It is moral and spiritual. And if we fail to solve

this moral and spiritual crisis we may be doomed like the great nations of the past.

The spiritual problem is also an individual problem – it is one that rests with you and me. There can be and will be no lasting social reform until the individuals who make up society are reformed. The problems of society are caused by men and women in our society. We are a nation of individuals, and we are perilously close to reproducing the lifestyle of the people in the book of Judges in the Old Testament, of whom it is said: “Every man did what was right in his own eyes.” Judges 17:6

What is the answer to the crisis that faces us at this hour? The greatest mistake that we could make would be to fail to diagnose the illness and offer an effective remedy.

The name of the disease is sin. Our nation must seek again the way of God and walk in the law of God. This is the only answer ultimately to America’s problems. I am not suggesting that more interest in religion is going to save us, because many people in Jeremiah’s day were religious. And that is true today as well. For all too many of us, however, religion is merely a formality that has little effect on the way we live and act during the week. Only a vital, personal faith in the living God of the Bible can get to the root of our problems.

The great question is, “How can we rediscover the faith that was once a dynamic, revolutionary, life-changing force in American society?”

The answer is to be found only in Jesus Christ, the greatest revolutionary of all time. He was not concerned primarily with political or economic revolutions. Instead, he came to enter the lives of men and women and revolutionize the most basic and stubborn source of the problem – the human heart. This change of heart is what we need as a nation. This is what you need now as an individual.

Christ can and wants to revolutionize your life – your home – your community – the entire nation. But it will have to start with you.

Something vital and historic could happen to America ... If men and women across the land will turn to God, it could have a profound effect on the future of this nation. The trend of our nation can be reversed. However, it will happen only as individual men and women reverse the trend of their lives by committing themselves to Jesus Christ.

I'm not asking you to turn to Christ in order to save America. I ask you to turn to Christ so that you can have purpose and meaning in your own life, so that you can find forgiveness before God, so you can have salvation and eternal life.

But I believe that in the midst of cynicism, discouragement and disillusionment, it's time to believe again, it's time to hope again, it's time to sing again, but you can only do it, and the nation can only be blessed, if first you have peace with God.

It is my prayer that you will find that peace – not only peace with God, but peace inside and peace with your neighbor.

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