

Is Lecrae a Next-Gen Billy Graham?

Christian rap artist Lecrae is speaking out on why many do not trust the church today and what can be done to restore Americans' moral foundation.

In a recent conversation with talk show host Eric Metaxas, Lecrae said church values are fading in America because Christians have become just a shell of "morality and religion and rules."

He also said the church has been silent on critical issues facing the nation for far too long.

"The church has been absent as far as race and justice for three decades. We're like: 'We haven't seen you since MLK!'" Lecrae said.

Once a drug dealer, the Christian rap artist's message reaches across racial divides and is especially attracting the youth.

"What I bring is unique; no one else brings to the table what I am," Lecrae said in a profile published by *The Washington Post* last week. "That's how I look at myself, a clear voice in the middle of it all."

Lecrae attracts certain evangelicals because of his "middle-of-the-road" position on hot button issues. After the Ferguson riots, Lecrae helped create a truce between a cop and protesters near his Atlanta home, the *Post* reported.

Some have compared Lecrae to a new kind of Billy Graham, an evangelist whose message could impact an entire generation.

"This generation doesn't have a Billy Graham," said LaDawn Johnson, a sociologist at Biola University, an evangelical school outside Los Angeles.

Johnson says that there is no longer a significant evangelical leader people look to.

“Lecrae is in a position where he could definitely, for many people, be that voice and be that model,” she said.

According to the Barna Group and other Christian expert groups, millennials from 18 to 30 years old are leaving the church in huge numbers and are not returning.

A separate study also reveals the younger generation is primarily attracted to what is authentic and relevant.

For many, Lecrae appears to fit that description. {eoa}

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