

Billy Graham's 'Judgment' Letter Sparks Charismatic Commotion

Famed evangelist Billy Graham's letter calling America and its "deceived people" to repentance is one in a series of escalating warnings that the nation is in growing danger of **God's judgment**, prominent faith leaders told Charisma News.

"This may be our last chance to call the nation to pray," says Anne Gimenez, national chairperson of America for Jesus—America for Jesus—The Awakening, which expects hundreds of thousands of people to gather at Independence Mall in Philadelphia Sept. 28-29 to pray and intercede for the United States.

"We believe it possibly could be the last time we have this opportunity. Nineveh is a great example. All the wickedness of that city, and yet when they did what God said they should do and repented, God healed their land. That's right where America is today. We're on the brink of America being destroyed as we know it, but I believe God is giving America a chance at this hour."

In his letter, "My Heart Aches for America," the 93-year-old Graham wrote that he recalled how his late wife, Ruth, once expressed concerns about the nation's "terrible downward spiral"—exclaiming, "If God doesn't punish America, He'll have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah."

Graham, who has preached to more people than any other Protestant in history—2.2 billion—wrote that he wondered what Ruth would think of the country today where "self-centered indulgence, pride and a lack of shame over sin are now emblems of the American lifestyle."

"My hearts aches for America," wrote Graham, who has provided spiritual counsel to every president from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush and received Barack Obama in his home in 2010. He has been on Gallup's "Ten Most Admired Men in the World" list 55 times since 1955.

"The wonderful news is that our Lord is a God of mercy, and He responds to **repentance**. In Jonah's Day, Nineveh was the lone world superpower—wealthy, unconcerned and self-centered. When the Prophet Jonah finally traveled to Nineveh and proclaimed God's warning, people heard and repented. I believe the same thing can happen once again, this time in our nation."

Graham's letter **calling America to repentance** comes as a growing number of highly respected Christian leaders have issued similar warnings in recent months, noting that the nation is in a downward spiral of economic decline, immorality, corruption, growing secular humanism and attacks on religious liberty.

Jack Hayford, the founding pastor of The Church on the Way in Van Nuys, Calif., and the former president of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, says Graham's letter comes as the nation is in a "very grim hour as we approach the election this year."

"What we need is something on the order of shock troops at this hour, and I can imagine that can be raised," Hayford says. "I don't feel despairing. I do feel the urgency. We are at a point that desperate action is needed and Billy's voice, certainly as no other, can give rise to that."

Rabbi Jonathan Cahn, the author of the *New York Times* best-selling book *The Harbinger*, says Graham's letter is a "prophetic word" that parallels the message in *The Harbinger*—that America is rapidly departing from God and is in danger of judgment unless it turns back to God in humble and genuine repentance.

The fact that Graham released the letter “should get our attention” and is “very striking” and “very stunning,” says Cahn, the senior rabbi at the nation’s largest messianic congregation, the Beth Israel Worship Center in Wayne, N.J.

“I believe this is a very, very critical time for America and for God’s people in America, and I believe it has ramifications for world history,” says Cahn, a descendant of Aaron, the high priest of the ancient Israelites and the brother of the Biblical prophet Moses. “The way that America goes is going to affect the world, and the way God’s people in America go will affect America.

“So, the message of *The Harbinger* is that we are in danger and that the same progression of judgment that occurred in the last days of ancient Israel is now occurring in America. The call is ultimately for salvation for those who don’t know the Lord and for repentance and revival for those who do. I see this (Graham’s letter) as another very stark sign that we are at a critical point.”

Joel Rosenberg, the *New York Times* best-selling author of *Implosion: Can America Recover from its Economic & Spiritual Challenges in Time?*, echoed Cahn’s remarks in a blog entry last week, noting Graham’s letter highlights “the need for **spiritual revival**.”

“America is in grave danger,” Rosenberg wrote. “The massacre in Aurora. The child sex-abuse scandal at Penn State. The scourge of abortion and pornography and runaway spending and debt in Washington. The list tragically goes on and on. In *Implosion*, I try to document how serious the situation is, and how a Third Great Awakening is the only answer.”

Graham’s letter comes as several organizations are planning prayer gatherings, evangelistic festivals and other events.

In his letter, Graham wrote his son Franklin Graham is

planning to launch an outreach entitled My Hope with Billy Graham “that wouldbring the gospel into neighborhoods and homes in every corner of America next year.”

“America is desperately in need of another **great awakening**,” says **Cindy Jacobs**, co-founder of Generals International. “As many other nations in history have belatedly discovered, one cannot eliminate the name of Jesus and think that God does not see. We all need to listen and respond to what the Lord has put on the heart of Dr. Billy Graham, and respond to his message of hope as well as courageously find our own voice in calling the church and nation to repent.”

Meanwhile, starting Sept. 28 and continuing through Nov. 6, 40 Days to Save America is calling for **prayer**, fasting and repentance in the 40 days prior to the presidential election.

“During the American Revolution, in the darkest days of the Civil War, at the outset of our involvement in World War II, leaders as different as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared national seasons of prayer, fasting and repentance,” wrote Rick Scarborough, chairman of 40 Days to Save America on the website.

“Today, our nation faces multiple crises—pending economic collapse, moral disintegration and international terrorism—but all have spiritual underpinnings. Together, they are even more daunting than those Americans confronted in 1776, 1863 and 1941. Now as then our national survival is at stake. Now as then, our destiny rests in God’s hands. The crises confronting us are beyond the power of human beings to resolve without divine guidance. Nothing short of a **Third Great Awakening** can save us.”

The calls for prayer and repentance come a year after Texas Gov. Rick Perry declared Aug. 6, 2011, a day of national prayer, fasting and repentance and invited fellow governors to attend The Response at Reliant Stadium in Houston. Given the

trials besetting the nation from the “global economic downturn to natural disasters, the lingering danger of terrorism and continued debasement of our culture,” Perry said he believed it was time to “convene the leaders from each of our United States in a day of prayer and fasting, like that described in the book of Joel.”

Doug Stringer, the founder of Somebody Cares America and the national mobilization coordinator for The Response, says a battle for the soul of the nation is underway, the wake-up call has come and yet “we keep pushing the snooze button.”

“Coming from one who has been such a great giant—an ambassador for Christ around the world—I think [Graham’s] words at age 93 should deeply, deeply impact each and every one of us,” Stringer says. “I really believe we’re in a Joel 2 moment where the church must take seriously personal and individual repentance. America is in trouble. We need God himself to intervene.”

For another **Great Awakening** to occur, Hayford says the church and believers must engage in “gut-level, spiritually-impassioned intercessory prayer”—something lacking in most churches today, few of which even hold prayer meetings anymore.

“The undermining of the ensconced dark powers that are eating out the underpinnings of our national life are only going to be neutralized and cast down in one way,” says Hayford, author of *Penetrating the Darkness: Discovering the Power of the Cross Against Unseen Evil*. “You can preach about it, and that’s valid, and it’s not worthless. But it’s what is awakened in the church through prayer that becomes the truly penetrating and ultimately victorious dynamic.”