

My Hope With Billy Graham to Reach Out to Lost Generation

Next Sunday morning, take a good look around your congregation and see if you notice anything in particular. Or more specifically, anyone in particular missing from the pews or folding chairs.

Young people are leaving the church in staggering numbers released recently by Pew Research Center polling. Almost one out of every three people under the age of 30 say they have no religious affiliation.

What does that mean exactly?

They do not attend church with any frequency and attach a low degree of importance to religion in their life.

One out of three. Or 32 percent to be exact.

“As sad as that number is, I don’t think that it’s an exaggeration at all,” said Jim Wood, Mobilization Director of *My Hope with Billy Graham*. “We have a generation that is growing up that is disenfranchised. Not just from the church and from what they see as organized religion, but in many cases disenfranchised from their family, from their community. Many of them are very much adrift.”

Wood has a heart for all of the lost, but when you talk about the staggering number of people turning away from Christianity—13 million in the U.S. consider themselves atheists or agnostic (nearly 6 percent)—his heart particularly breaks for the youth of this generation.

And that’s why he’s so passionate about *My Hope with Billy*

Graham, a nationwide outreach throughout the U.S. and Canada in November of 2013 aimed at reaching the lost with the life-changing gospel.

My Hope with Billy Graham will work with local churches to train their congregations in relationship **evangelism** and give them a rare opportunity to invite their family, friends and neighbors over for a 30-minute outreach program and a chance to begin a relationship with Christ.

And for this younger generation, they will be confronted with a deeply spiritual question: Is there a need for God in my life?

“A larger percentage in this generation than before don’t see a need for faith in God,” Wood said. “They think they can go on and do what they want to do. That’s obviously not long-term satisfaction for most people.”

The trends in the past five years are alarming, and not just for the youth. From just over 15 percent to just under 20 percent, the number of all Americans who say they have no religious affiliation is now at a staggering 46 million people.

And while 68 percent of those people say they believe in God, almost all report they are not looking for a religion that is right for them.

“It’s very easy then to embrace that I don’t need to deal with the whole God thing,” Wood said.

Adam Morgan, one of the mobilization coordinators for *My Hope with Billy Graham*, is 26 years old and feels the Pew study is probably fairly accurate. Morgan knows a lot of unbelievers under 30 and sees a common thread in almost each person.

“More than anything, people just want to follow the flesh, hands-down, in my generation,” Morgan said. “We don’t want to subject ourselves to an authority and calls us to do something other than what we want to do in our flesh.”

Which for Morgan makes the challenge of reaching a nation for Jesus even greater. But it also exponentially ramps up his urgency in sharing the hope and love of Christ that can change hearts in an instant.

“I know this,” Morgan said. “It has to be the Gospel. People my age have to understand how the Gospel and its implications for life cover everything that has to do with life.”

Morgan thinks the key to *My Hope with Billy Graham* is when the unsaved in your influence realize that Christianity is real, authentic and 24/7.

Not just a Sunday morning experience.

“For a lot of people, they think the gospel or spirituality or religion is a subset of their life like sports or art or other interests,” Morgan said. “As a 26-year-old guy trying to reach my friends, it does start with living out the gospel.

“Truly and genuinely, it starts with a transparency that you don’t have it all together. I’m not perfect, but the only difference between myself and a non-believer is that I am willing—and that’s the key, willing—to admit my wrongdoing and surrender myself to Christ.”

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