

Praying for the Next Great Awakening

Hardly a day passes that I don't hear someone say, "We are losing our country; we are losing our churches."

While doomsday appears to be knocking at our door, let me take you back to the early 1800s. Many think of it as "the good old days," but history tells us that society, even then, was as bad as it could get at that time. John Marshall, chief justice of the United States Supreme Court, wrote to President James Madison and said, "The church is too far gone ever to be redeemed." When we examine why, we find that preachers had stopped preaching the whole Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the people were not hearing God's Word.

What changed? Christians began to diligently pray for revival—and the result was the Second Great Awakening. When people's prayers stormed the heavens, and when the Bible was opened in the pulpits and the Word of God proclaimed by passionate preachers, the church was awakened from slumber by the Holy Spirit, who moved in hearts, spreading revival throughout the heartland of America.

There have been several Great Awakenings in our nation's history. When I read about them, I always go back to the Old Testament, to a time in which Israel had once again turned its back on God. When its people came to their senses, they gathered and asked Ezra the scribe to bring the Word of the Lord to them. The Bible tells us that Ezra stood upon a pulpit of wood, and he opened the book in the sight of all the people (see Nehemiah 8).

Our hope and desire—and our prayer—here at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association is to stir up followers of Jesus Christ to pray and ask for a great awakening of the church.

Through the *My Hope America* outreach, we have already seen the results of what happens when God's truth is proclaimed. Just last year, multiplied thousands of souls were won to Jesus Christ, and Christians across the country have asked us to continue providing more My Hope evangelistic programming and resources.

This year, as part of *My Hope 2014*, we are preparing a brand-new film, including a never-before-released message from my father. While he is no longer able to stand in the pulpit to proclaim the Word of God, we have captured on video God's Word that burns in his heart. Last summer as he was taping his message on The Cross, which was released on his 95th birthday in November, he also shared his thoughts on Heaven, and we are excited about bringing it to you this fall. We had no idea at that time how God would direct us to use this message on Heaven, but it is now being developed into a powerful new program that also includes compelling testimonies of changed lives. Please pray with us that the Holy Spirit will use it to transform the hearts and lives of countless people who will realize the hope of eternity in Heaven.

The new 30-minute film will be made available, at no charge, to churches for use across the country as we did last year. Please encourage your church to get involved in praying and planning so that this message can be used effectively in your community. The program will also be televised as well as available for download via the Internet.

We plan to do a new evangelistic *My Hope* film every year for the next several years and make it available for churches and individuals to use to win souls.

Prayer is the key to reaching lost people for Christ, and I hope you will begin praying now for neighbors, co-workers, friends, and family who do not know Jesus Christ as Savior. Make a point to pray for your church and other churches in your community, asking God to stir up an ever-increasing

urgency for evangelism.

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