

Billy Graham: 'I Won't Let You Drown'

On a recent Sunday morning in my father's hometown of Charlotte, N.C., a group of atheists gathered for their first Sunday Assembly, what they are proudly calling a "godless congregation." They plan to meet regularly, one of more than 60 similar Sunday Assembly groups who have organized in cities around the country as well as internationally. At the Charlotte group's inaugural event, they played John Lennon's song "Imagine" as their theme. The lyrics begin with the words, "Imagine there's no heaven ..."

Instead of the peace, harmony and love that Lennon envisioned in his song, what I imagine—in fact, what I know from God's Word—is that a world without heaven, without God, is a nightmare filled with wickedness, torment and eventually eternal punishment. Lennon's dream of utopia is really a vision of hell.

Friends, we are surrounded by people every day who are destined for eternity separated from God. They are living "separated from Christ, ... having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12, ESV). "They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (2 Thess. 1:9). We must sound the warning. We must reach them with the hope of heaven, before it's too late.

Think about how little hope there is in our world today. In Iraq, under ISIS, there is not much hope. In West Africa, living under Ebola, people are losing hope. Here in the U.S., under widespread drug and alcohol abuse, depression, chronic unemployment, violent crime and the downward moral spiral, hope seems elusive.

The ultimate hope is to know that our sins are forgiven, that one day we will be in the presence of God for eternity. There is no greater hope regardless of what happens on earth.

When Jesus met the rich young ruler, the man asked, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 18:18). That is still the question on the lips of millions of human beings. How can anyone face eternity with no hope? Jesus Christ is the only hope—no one else can take away our sins. Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

This November, we’ve got a great tool for the nationwide “My Hope 2014 with Billy Graham” evangelistic outreach—a powerful new 30-minute film called *Heaven*. You’ll want to watch this with your friends and invite people to see it, especially those who are unsaved and have no ultimate hope. They’ll see gripping, real-life stories of people who desired lasting hope and found it in Jesus Christ, and they will hear a clear and loving presentation of the gospel. As they watch the program, you pray and see what God will do.

Churches and individuals all over America are planning ways to show *Heaven* during November and beyond. If your church is not participating yet in “My Hope 2014,” it’s not too late. Go to today and sign up. You can get a free *Heaven* DVD, whether for your church or yourself, or download it after October 27. In the film, my father asks a pointed question: “Is it right for me to warn you what Jesus taught and what the Bible teaches from cover to cover? Suppose you were a drowning man and I have the gospel lifeboat. I’m not going to let you drown if I can help it!”

The Bible teaches us that “he who wins souls is wise” (Prov. 11:30, NKJV). Jesus talked about the futility of building up treasure on earth, where “moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.” Rather, He said, the wise investment is to “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven”

(Matt. 6:19–20).

God can use your prayers for a lost person, your invitation to someone to hear the gospel and your financial gift to make an eternal difference. The times today are so difficult—the world is moving so fast that it can be absolutely frightening. I hope you take advantage of this opportunity to invest in the souls of men.

My father will be turning 96 on November 7, and we are thankful to still have him with us. Even though he is weak physically, he is doing reasonably well for someone his age. He is so grateful for all who stand with this ministry in their prayers and support.

Franklin Graham, *son of iconic evangelist Billy Graham, is the president and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Samaritan's Purse.*

This article originally appeared on