

Despite Ridicule, Evangelists Believe in Salvation for America

Reinhard Bonnke declared in Orlando last weekend that “America shall be saved.” At the same time, My Hope With Billy Graham is making a major push to get Christians to invite neighbors into their homes in November to share the gospel.

The declaration “America shall be saved” is a prophetic word we put in the September issue of *Charisma* when we covered what Bonnke’s Christ for All Nations and what the Billy Graham organization is planning (as well as other ministries around the nation). As journalists, we sense something is happening—something others may not see because, on the surface, it seems the church is losing ground at every turn. If you read our *Charisma News* daily, you read recently about a blog post by Mark Driscoll that says no longer are Christians on a bandwagon, but rather we have been rolled over by the bandwagon.

So, what’s up? No longer are Christians a majority, where it’s the socially accepted thing to do to go to church on Sunday, let alone be an on-fire, Bible-believing Christian who lives a holy life. Things the church has stood against, such as drinking, gambling and sexual promiscuity, are now accepted parts of American society. No longer is the Bible held up as the standard. It’s ridiculed, and it seems Christians are often persecuted for their faith or for standing for their values.

Then a 73-year-old German evangelist who has been declaring for decades that “Africa shall be saved” (and who claims to have led 76 million to Christ in Africa) is now saying that about America. The Good News crusade in Orlando is the first

of many Christ for All Nations is planning in cities around the nation. The next one is scheduled for next May in Raleigh, N.C., followed in rapid succession by others around the nation.

And 95-year-old Billy Graham, America's greatest evangelist, is sponsoring what many are predicting may be his biggest evangelistic thrust ever because it involves ordinary people like you and me.

This may be the difference. Individual Christians are getting involved and inviting their friends. I saw it at the Bonnke meeting in my hometown of Orlando. Christians who rarely invite anyone to church were bringing friends. The new Amway Center, where the Magic play, was nearly full both nights. And the altars were full.

Christian friends I'd known but hadn't seen for years were there and seemed excited by what Bonnke was doing. It was as if they were saying, "Finally, someone is doing something, and we're glad to be involved." And the simple gospel message was so powerful. It was as if everyone felt "This is right," regardless of what the popular culture says.

To me, that's healthy. If anything, Christians have grown complacent, even lazy, and compromise seems the order of the day. This is a wake-up call. I believe the Holy Spirit is beginning something new. Sure, things are tough in the culture and in the spiritual realm. Things we've tried—like legislation and insisting our values be upheld—have not worked. Now we must do the work of evangelism and win people one by one. In the process, if we reach enough people, our nation will be saved.

This is not the only difficult time in history for the church. Think of what things were like in the days of Martin Luther or John Wesley. Even in colonial America, the spiritual climate was so bad, it sparked the Great Awakening. The era after

World War I leading up to World War II had huge setbacks for the church. (Remember the Scopes Monkey trial and the repeal of prohibition?)

That's not all. It was a day when despots killed millions. Can you imagine what life would be like for the church—and all of mankind—had Hitler won World War II? Yet all that led to the rebirth of Israel and the great revivals that gave us leaders like Billy Graham and Oral Roberts.

The 1960s were difficult times in our nation, yet the Charismatic Renewal began in the Roman Catholic Church, and the Jesus Movement swept millions of wayward youth into the kingdom. Many of today's leaders came to Christ in the Jesus Movement. (I speak from experience. Even though I was raised in the church, I was wayward and came back to Christ during those days.)

The Good News crusade encouraged me because it was the greatest evangelistic outreach we've had in Orlando since Billy Graham held a crusade in the 1980s. The meetings were anointed, organized and high-tech in terms of presentation. Yet there was a humility on the part of the leaders that was refreshing. I'm not sure what I expected, but the meetings exceeded my expectations.

Now I urge you to get involved in My Hope With Billy Graham. I'm involving my staff, and we will give it strong coverage. But I'm also getting involved personally by inviting my neighbors into my own home. Some are neighbors I've never met. But now I have a reason to reach out. I know many will do what I'm doing.

When I posted video clips of the Good News crusade on Facebook, I got some cynicism from those who said they'd seen attempts to reach the nation before or felt that Bonnke was only preaching to the choir. Sure, he had nearly 300 churches involved and 1,000 volunteers.

But by seeing the hundreds streaming to the altars, there were many who turned over their lives to Christ. And there were those who, like me, wanted and prayed for something like this to take place. It was an encouragement. I felt that something shifted in the Spirit.

Only time will tell, but could this be the fuse that was lit to bring to America the revival we pray will come?

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