

Franklin Graham: Take a Stand for Christ

By Janet Chismar • February 23, 2009

Christians are openly scorned and ridiculed by the media. When is the last time you saw a believer in Jesus Christ favorably portrayed by the entertainment industry?

Can you recall a single recent occasion when Christian virtues such as abstinence or marital faithfulness were treated respectfully by any major media outlet?

A recent cover article of Newsweek featured the image of the Bible, with this headline: "The Religious Case for Gay Marriage." It, of course, denied the plain teaching of Scripture that homosexuality is sin, and termed the authoritative truth of the Scripture (and those who adhere to it) as the "worst kind of fundamentalism."

On the judicial front, our courts continue to grow increasingly hostile to any public expression of Christian faith. Public schools, funded with the tax dollars of millions of Christians, make it difficult for Christian students to exercise their freedom of religion while accommodating and openly tolerating the belief system of other religions.

Our culture today hates the Name of Jesus. They don't want it mentioned in public prayer (the same individual who sued me when I gave the invocation for President Bush in 2001 sued again to try and stop the inaugural prayer this January).

In our pluralistic, tolerant age, the mere mention of Jesus Christ as "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6) is an affront. In an era of inclusiveness, where all faiths must be equally acceptable, the exclusive claims of the Gospel are considered intellectually and morally offensive. What can we do?

We begin with prayer and repentance. We first examine ourselves and come to the Lord in true humility. "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14, NKJV). We are God's people, and since He is holy, we are to be holy as well.

We must respectfully engage those in our circles of influence with the truth of the Gospel. "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander" (1 Peter 3:15–16, NIV). Christians should never resort to the divisive, hostile behavior often employed by those who demean our faith. We speak the truth in love.

While respectful, we nevertheless must be bold in our faith. This is not the time to be ashamed of our faith, but to boldly confess Jesus Christ as Lord. That's why, with every opportunity I am given, I clearly articulate the Gospel message. I will never shrink back from proclaiming Jesus Christ as the only Name by which men can be saved (Acts 4:12, NIV).

With God's help, we can make a difference. We must make a difference.

©2009 BGEA