

## Not An Acts 2 World

Ponder: Reaching people with the gospel

Scripture: "For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore, we want to know what these things mean" (Acts 17:20, NKJV).

A preacher friend of mine recently said something that startled me: "We don't live in an Acts 2 world!" I thought to myself, "Wait! We still preach the same gospel Peter reached in Acts 2." But my friend wasn't suggesting a different gospel. He was talking about the cultural shift in America.

In Acts 2 Peter and the other apostles preached the gospel to people who already knew about the one true God and recognized the Scriptures as His word. After all, Jews came from everywhere to Jerusalem for the Pentecost holiday because they knew the Scriptures (i.e. the Mosaic Law) directed them to do so. Peter quoted extensively from the Old Testament (the only divinely inspired Scriptures in existence then). His audience had no trouble recognizing those passages, having heard them in their home synagogues.

When I began preaching over 40 years ago, most Americans believed in the true God and recognized the Bible as His word like the Jews in Acts 2. I could usually start from that point and show them their need for salvation through faith in Christ and obedience to His gospel. Unfortunately, that starting point is becoming more and more rare.

My preacher friend pointed out that America today is more like Athens in Acts 17 than Jerusalem in Acts 2. The Athenians believed in multiple gods and didn't know which of them to worship. One altar's inscription read: "To The Unknown God." The message of Jesus and the resurrection was bizarre and foreign to them.

Multitudes of modern Americans think God is whoever or whatever you decide He is, or maybe we're all God, or the universe is God. A lady on TV recently won a new car and remarked that it was "a gift from the universe." This "New Age" thinking rejects the Bible as absolute truth. Each individual has his own "truth," and all "truths" are equally valid.

We can no longer assume folks believe in the true God or accept the Bible as His word. But, like Paul, we can and must start from where they are and lead them to Christ. We have our work cut out for us!

Hymn: "Lead Me To Some Soul Today"

Prayer: Father, please give us wisdom to know how to approach people with the gospel. In Jesus' name, Amen.