

Hebron Baptist Church

Consequences of the Scopes Trial

The ACLU in New York initiated the Scopes Trial of July 1925. Alarmed over “antievolution” bills that were being introduced in the legislatures of 20 states in the early 1920s, the ACLU hoped to find a test case. These bills forbade public schools from teaching the evolution of man, but generally ignored the evolution of anything else.

John Scopes was a substitute teacher who never taught evolution while subbing two weeks in a biology class. But the textbook used in the class did cover the evolution of man. Scopes really did not violate the Butler Act (the Tennessee “antievolution” law), but the ACLU considered it sufficient for their test case.

Technically, the only legal issue in the trial was: did John Scopes violate the Butler Act by teaching that man evolved from a lower order of animals? However, for both Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryan, the real issue was whether evolution should be taught as fact in public schools?

The trial lasted only twelve days and Scopes was found guilty as charged. Much of Darrow’s effort at the trial amounted to a vicious, sarcastic attack against the Bible and Christianity.

On the seventh day of the trial, Darrow challenged Bryan to take the stand as a witness and expert on the Bible. Bryan foolishly agreed. After sarcastically and often inaccurately recounting several miracles in the Old Testament, Darrow raised the matter of a six-day creation.

Bryan denied that the Bible says God created everything in six, 24-hour days. In answer to how long creation might have taken, Bryan said, “It might have continued for millions of years.” With the help of Bryan’s compromise on the days of creation, Darrow achieved his goal of making the Bible subject to reinterpretation by science.

Darrow lost the Scopes case, but he got the Christian to admit, in front of a worldwide audience, that he could not defend the Bible as written. Instead, Bryan accepted the world’s teaching on “millions of years”.

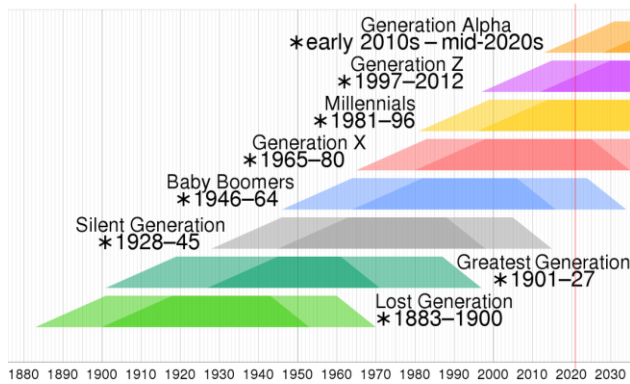
Sadly, most Christians today accept the world’s teaching and reject the truth of the Bible regarding creation and history.



“WHEN in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.

“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness – That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government...”

Declaration of Independence excerpt



Generational groups can make for interesting conversations, but they are not scientifically defined, and can lead to stereotypes and oversimplification.

The oldest member/attender of HBC is 100-years-old and the youngest is just a few months. That covers the seven generations currently at HBC and presents challenges and opportunities in ministry to those within and without the church walls.

According to a 2022 poll, only half of Americans confidently affirm the existence of God. That is a drop of 10 points from 2008.

Church attendance is also falling, with a record 34 percent of Americans never attending church services.

Also, in 2022, 27 percent of Americans said they no longer identify with any religion. That number was 19 percent in 2012 and 16 percent in 2006.

The proportion of Americans who profess no religious associations increases with every younger generation: 9 percent among the Silent Generation, 18 percent among Baby Boomers, 25 percent with Gen X, 29 percent for Millennials, and 34 percent in Gen Z.

So, what has brought America to this point? We will start to examine the answers in next month's newsletter.

"We must, indeed, all hang together or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately."



Benjamin Franklin spoke those famous words after signing the *Declaration of Independence*. He and the other 55 signers knew that they were committing treason against the British Crown by affixing their names, and that they would be hanged if captured.

What happened to the signers?

Five signers were captured by the British and brutally tortured as traitors.

Nine fought in the War for Independence and died from wounds or other hardships.

Two lost sons in the war.

Another two had sons captured.

At least twelve had their homes pillaged and burned.

Seventeen lost everything they owned.