

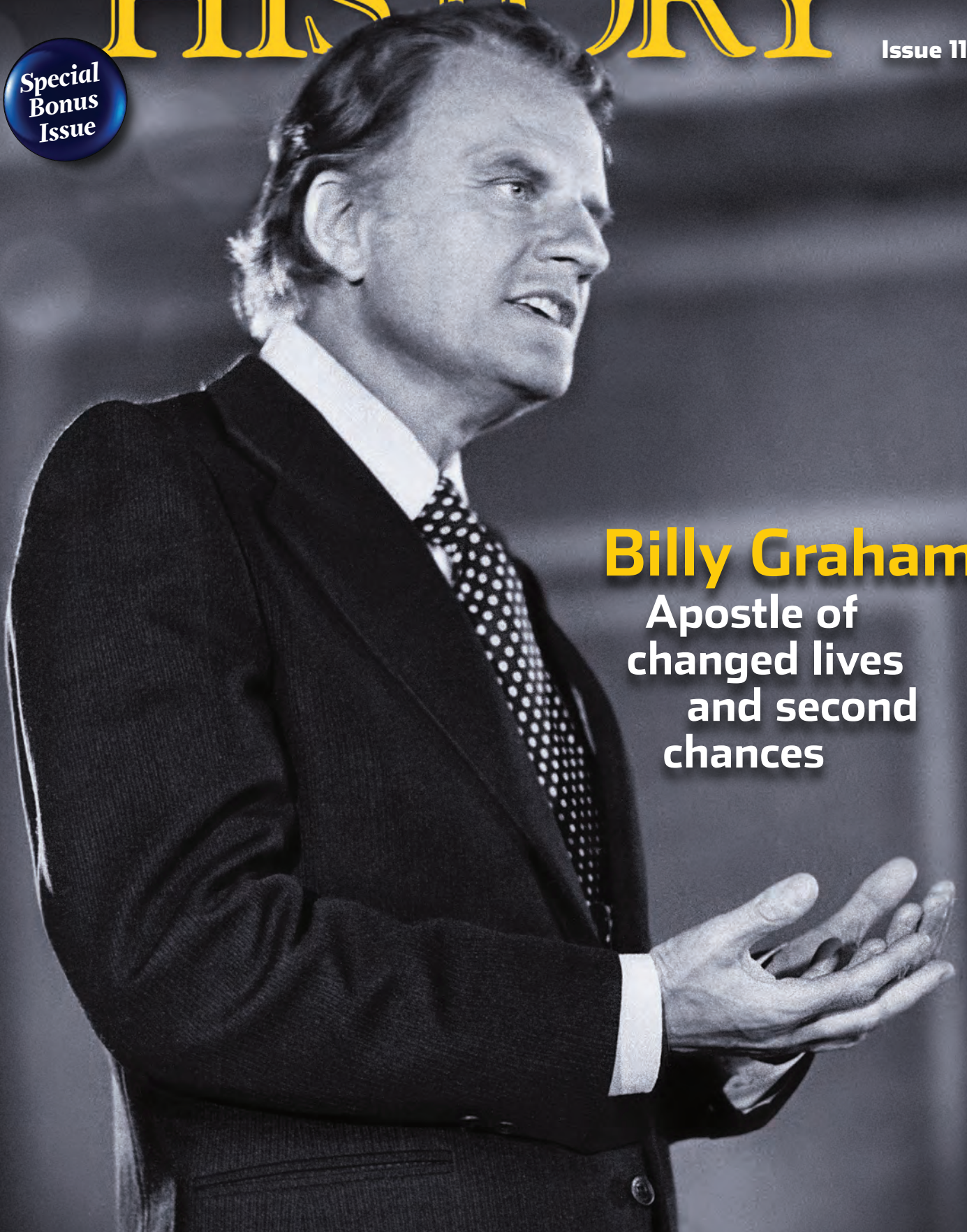
CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Issue 111

Special
Bonus
Issue

Billy Graham

Apostle of
changed lives
and second
chances





Did you know?

Billy Graham's political temptation, his friendships with entertainers and heads of state, and the impact of his music team

SETTING THE CRUSADES TO MUSIC

- For nearly 20 years, African American blues singer and actress Ethel Waters was a regular guest artist at Billy Graham's crusades. She rededicated her life to Christ at the 1957 New York City Crusade and regularly performed her signature song, "His Eye Is on the Sparrow," until the San Diego crusade of 1976. She died in 1977.

- During the 1960s, Graham watched the transformation of American youth culture. When a concert promoter invited him to speak at a rock festival that included Santana, Procul Harum, and the Grateful Dead, Graham leapt at the chance, saying, "I really dig this generation of young people." By the Greater Chicago Crusade of June 1971, his special guest was British contemporary Christian music pioneer Judy MacKenzie. Pre-service music included "Bridge over Troubled Water" and "Put Your Hand in the Hand." In 1994 Graham moved on to Christian rap trio dc Talk and in 2013 he folded rapper Lecrae into his My Hope outreach.

- The Swedish hymn, "How Great Thou Art," was written in 1885, but it didn't gain much popularity until Billy Graham's bass soloist, George Beverly Shea, began singing it. A friend passed a copy of the song to him in London in 1954, and he started singing it in Toronto the next year. It really started take off with audiences during the 1957 New York Crusade. Shea later remembered, "We sang it about a hundred times at the insistence of the New York audiences. And from then on, it became a standard."

THE BLUES SINGER *Left:* After hearing Graham on the radio, singer Ethel Waters thought he might be a phoney, because no "white preacher could be that good." Then she met him and concluded that he was "God's chosen."

THIS IS MY SONG *Below:* Soloist "Bev" Shea and choir director-emcee Cliff Barrows formed the core of Graham's music team from the start. It was Shea who suggested having a choir sing "Just As I Am" during the invitations.



- American believers from the middle of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth loved blind poet Fanny Crosby's hymns. "Blessed Assurance" and "Rescue the Perishing" were steady favorites. But her now-popular song "To God Be the Glory" got little attention in America until Cliff Barrows heard English Christians sing it during the 1954 Harringay crusade. "We picked it up, brought it back to America and used it in all the crusades," Barrows recalled. After he introduced it at Madison Square Garden three years later, it shot from being included in a mere 7% of American hymnals in 1957 to 41% by 1990.



THE RAPPER After a string of chart-topping releases, hip-hop star Lecrae Moore shared his testimony in Graham's 2013 My Hope outreach. For the video's concert footage, he sported an "I Am Unashamed" (Rom. 1:16) T-shirt.

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SHEA AND BARROWS © BILLY GRAHAM EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION. USED BY PERMISSION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. WWW.BILLYGRAHAM.ORG
LECRAE—REACH RECORDS



SEOUL MAN In 1973 Graham and Korean translator Dr. Billy Kim addressed his largest crowd ever: 3.2 million over five days, including 1.1 million at the closing service.

SKINNY-DIPPING WITH LBJ

Occasionally, after an Oval Office visit, Lyndon Johnson would propose a swim in the White House pool. Since no one brings a bathing suit to a White House meeting, this sorted the uptight from the laid-back. On Graham's first visit to the Johnson White House, LBJ suggested a swim to Graham and sidekick Grady Wilson. Graham was taken by surprise. But, country boy that he was, he stripped and swam. The preacher and the president enjoyed each other's company so much that their scheduled 15-minute visit ran to five hours.

ARMY AVERTED

The year after he graduated from Wheaton College, Billy Graham was accepted into the U.S. Army's chaplaincy program. But army doctors told him he was three pounds underweight. Just when he had put on those pounds, he came down with the mumps, which raged on for two months and turned into orchitis. Graham missed the chaplaincy training program, but while he was recovering his strength, Youth for Christ director Torrey Johnson recruited him as the group's first full-time evangelist. The rest is history.

POLITICAL TEMPTATION

In the run-up to the 1952 election, there was no clear choice for a Republican candidate, and Billy Graham toyed with the idea of running for president. Ruth Graham quickly told him, "I don't think the


VIETNAM '66 Graham gave up plans for military chaplaincy. Still, he habitually visited troops in wartime.

American people would vote for a divorced president, and if you leave ministry for politics, you will certainly have a divorce on your hands."

SPECIAL ENVOY

In 1971, U.S. policy began to shift toward the exiled Chinese government of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang asked to have Billy Graham, whom he called a close friend, explain the changes to him. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and President Nixon agreed that Graham should act as an unofficial envoy. Kissinger gave Graham talking points and sensitive background. The year after Graham met with Chiang, Nixon went to mainland China and began a process that undermined the special U.S. relationship with Chiang's government.

CROWD CONTROL

Early on, Billy Graham's team agreed not to inflate statistics and to use only official crowd estimates. Of his ten largest crusades, eight were held outside the United States. The largest local attendance ever was in Seoul, South Korea, in 1973, with 3,210,000 present over five days. The largest virtual event was the 1995 satellite broadcast of meetings in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Reputable scholars estimate the electronic audience at one billion. 



Editor's note



"AT THE END OF THE DAY," Duke Divinity School historian Grant Wacker told me in an email, "Billy Graham ranks with John Paul II and Martin Luther King Jr. as one of the three most influential Christians of the 20th century." Dr. Wacker, author of *America's Pastor*, a long-awaited cultural biography of Billy Graham, mentored several people on the *Christian History* team: senior editor Chris Armstrong, managing editor Jennifer Woodruff Tait, and former managing editor and current image researcher Jennifer Trafton Peterson. When he talks, we listen.

When I was editor of *Christianity Today*, which Graham founded in 1956, I was very aware of his role in shaping American evangelical Protestantism. We kept our founder's vision in focus: we were to be pro-church, pro-Bible, pro-evangelism, and evangelically ecumenical.

But in editing this issue of *Christian History*, I became newly aware of how the global evangelical network would not have been born without Graham. Be sure to

Find *Christian History* on the Internet at www.christianhistorymagazine.org and on Facebook as ChristianHistoryMagazine.




BACKSTAGE WITH BILLY This issue's guest editor, David Neff, talks with Graham in Buenos Aires, 1991.

read Uta Balbier's excellent account ("Go forth to every part of the world," pp. 13–17) of how that came to be.

In November 1991 I flew to Buenos Aires to cover Billy Graham's crusade there. I brought with me William Martin's newly published biography *Prophet with Honor*. The day before the crusade, I was reading it in the hotel where 300 of the crusade team were staying when I heard someone say, "You must be David Neff." I looked at the man quizzically, and he said, "No one else in this place would dare be seen with that in public."

The tightly knit Graham organization was protective of their leader, and they worried that this book would not be fair. Most previous biographies had been worshipful, but one notable exception treated Graham as a super salesman who had turned from his successful career hawking Fuller Brushes to become "a Tupperware Isaiah." Martin's new book turned out to be extremely friendly and respectful, and it set the standard for careful research on and scholarly judgment of Billy Graham.

Such scholarship has been maturing ever since. In September 2013 five of the contributors to this issue presented papers at a conference on "The Worlds of Billy Graham" held on the campus of Graham's alma mater, Wheaton College. As you read their articles, you will see them exercise critical judgment as they also show respect and affection for a great man.

Dr. Wacker told me about his personal sense of Billy Graham: "Each of the four times we have been with him in his home, we have come down from the mountain silent, feeling that we have been in the presence of Greatness." As you read this issue, we hope that you will experience that same sense of Billy Graham's greatness. 



David Neff
Guest editor

CHRISTIAN HISTORY



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Guest Editor, Issue 111
David Neff

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Dr. Grant Wacker

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Kaylena Radcliff

Layout
Dan Graves

Image Researchers
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Publisher
Christian History Institute

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Watershed: Los Angeles 1949

The revival that took Billy Graham from anonymity to national fame

GRANT WACKER

IN 1997 BILLY GRAHAM was a year shy of his 80th birthday. He had lived an extraordinary life. In the previous half-century, he had grown from an obscure itinerant preacher into a national leader of the emerging evangelical movement and an international icon accustomed to golfing with presidents and dining with prime ministers. By many accounts he ranked as the most influential evangelist since George Whitefield in the eighteenth century. So on the eve of his 80th birthday, he agreed to the requests of many people and put it all together in a memoir, *Just As I Am*.

The task was not easy. With a life so long and so filled with travel and events and people, where would he start? How would he find a narrative line to pull it all together? He judged that the fulcrum of his career—and thus the fulcrum of the memoir—rested in chapter 9,

SMASHING GOOD LOOKS “Tall, slender, handsome” Youth for Christ veteran Billy Graham made John 3:16–studded sermons the centerpiece of his revivals.

which he called, significantly, “Watershed: Los Angeles 1949.”

That choice was sound, for the tactics Graham deployed in Los Angeles etched the template for virtually all his crusade meetings for the next six decades. Most of the components had appeared in Billy Sunday’s revivals before and after World War I and in less developed form in Graham’s own Charlotte campaign in 1947. But in Los Angeles the combination was more than the sum of the parts, not least because of the sheer size and complexity of the endeavor.

When Graham hopped off the train in Southern California in mid-September 1949, he was bursting



PUBLICITY PATHBREAKER Graham demanded an unprecedented advertising budget for the meetings. Flyers, posters, and newspaper ads were effective, but celebrity conversions took attendance to new levels.

with energy. When he boarded the train home eight weeks later, he had lost 20 pounds and struggled with exhaustion. Little wonder. He had preached 65 sermons to an aggregate audience of 350,000—maybe 400,000—souls jammed into a Ringling Brothers tent pitched near the city's central shopping district. The meetings ran every night and Sunday afternoons from September 25 to November 20. Around 6,000 people either committed or recommitted their lives to Christ. Graham spoke to countless civic, school, and business groups, making three to four appearances a day. He gave dozens of interviews. He even schmoozed with Hollywood celebrities such as Cecil B. DeMille, Spencer Tracy, and Katharine Hepburn.

COMMITTEE WORK

The story of Graham's "Watershed" started back in 1943. At that time, the Christian Businessmen's Committee of Los Angeles joined with local parachurch organizations such as Navigators, Christian Endeavor, and, especially, Youth for Christ (YFC) to create the Christ for Greater Los Angeles committee. Between 1943 and 1949, the committee sponsored 17 citywide evangelistic meetings, led by nationally known revivalists such as Hyman Appleman, Jack Shuler, Merv Rosell, and Charles Templeton (who later lost his faith). Not satisfied, in 1948 they invited a relatively untested young preacher from North Carolina to try his hand.

The first time the committee invited Graham, he turned them down, thinking the time was not ripe. The following year they asked again, and he agreed—but with conditions. He required that they incorporate clergy into the committee, secure the support of local

churches (more than 300 eventually joined), increase the size of the tent to accommodate 6,500 people, and beef up the advertising budget to the then unheard of sum of \$25,000 (equivalent to \$244,000 in 2013).

In *Just As I Am*, Graham characteristically insisted the revival's success was entirely "God's doing" (his emphasis). But he underestimated at least three streams of influence.

The first stream grew from the external political, social, and economic environment. On Friday, September 23, two days before the revival, President Harry Truman announced that the Soviet Union had exploded an atomic bomb. The United States was no longer the sole possessor of nuclear weapons. That turn of events felt even more ominous because the Soviets had embraced the deadly, aggressive, atheistic ideology of communism. The threat felt frightfully real.

Six days after the revival started, mainland China fell to Mao Zedong's Red Army. Communists possessed both the determination and the ability, in Graham's words, "to holster the whole world." At home things looked just as grim. Recurrent economic downturns and the spiraling threat of juvenile delinquency rattled Americans' self-confidence. Beyond those perils, wherever Graham looked on the American landscape—and he looked everywhere—he saw multiple additional threats: militarism, racism, materialism, and rampant sexual immorality.

The second stream of influence grew from the committee and Graham's awareness that revivals had to be "worked up as well as prayed down." The committee initiated concerts of prayer (that is, people praying at the same time of the day in multiple places) fully nine



IN THE PAPERS Above: Newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst focused the press on Graham and brought him national attention.

months before the revival started. It systematically enlisted the support of hundreds of local churches and laypeople from the Southern California region.

But the committee also “worked up” the revival by using advertising adeptly. It blanketed the region with flyers, posters, and banners. The materials heralded the coming “mammoth” tent, “6000 free seats,” “inspiring music,” “unprecedented demand,” “dynamic preaching,” and “America’s foremost evangelist.” Hyperbole took no vacation.

The third stream of influence grew from Graham’s own style. Besides having smashing good looks, he knew how to dress the part. He was outfitted in pastel suits, billowing kerchief, hand-painted ties, flamboyant argyle socks, and wide-brimmed hats. He was—as his own advance billing put it—“tall, slender, handsome, with a curly shock of blond hair, Graham looks like a collar ad, acts like a motion picture star, thinks like a psychology professor, talks like a North Carolinian and preaches like a combination of Billy Sunday and Dwight L. Moody. . . . He uses few illustrations, no sob stories, absolutely no deathbed stuff.”

MAN WITH A MESSAGE

But of course the main thing was not Graham’s looks or dress but his preaching, which served as the centerpiece of the revival. Few considered him eloquent, but no one doubted his effectiveness. The content of the sermons proved predictable, night after night. Years later one of Graham’s close associates would say, “If you have heard Billy 10 times, you probably have heard all

SRO Left: By the end of the crusade, the tent had been expanded to seat 9,000, and thousands more stood outside—for a total of 15,000 on one remarkable occasion.

of his sermons.” Truth was, if followers had heard *one* of Billy’s sermons, they had heard them all. Sooner or later every one of them circled around to the same text, John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” In every sermon of every service for the rest of his life, Graham would say, he drove for a verdict.

The messages followed a predictable format. In Act I, Graham began with a litany of the international and national perils noted above—communism, economic depression, immorality, and crime—among others. Act II consisted of Graham relating those external threats to internal ones of meaninglessness, loneliness, addictions, backsliding, or never knowing God in the first place.

All of those maladies ultimately grew from a single source, and that was the sinful heart. Graham made clear that while sin was innate—what theologians called “original sin”—it manifested itself in sinful acts. Yet the good news was that cleansing from sin and new life in Christ were available for anyone, simply for the asking and taking. Believe that Christ died for your sins, Graham boomed, receive him into your hearts, and then carry forth lives of faith and holiness. In short, the external threats and the internal ones mirror one another. And the solution for both is the same: Christ.

"5TH SIN-SMASHING WEEK" *Top:* Newspaper ads proclaimed Graham's promise to keep "L.A.'s greatest revival" going "as long as sinners are finding Salvation at the Throne of Grace." *Bottom:* It all took place in the "mammoth" tent.

If the content of Graham's sermons proved predictable, so did the manner of delivery. Clenched fists pounded the lectern, pointed fingers stabbed the air, and crouched knees hurled the preacher forward and backward. Graham paced the platform relentlessly, aided by a newly acquired lapel microphone. By one account he paced two miles during every sermon. One reporter said he revealed "the coiled tension of a panther." The words poured forth fast and loud. A stenographer clocked the torrent at 240 words a minute. The speed was intentional. Graham self-consciously adopted the rapid-fire delivery of successful radio newscasters like Walter Winchell and H. B. Kaltenborn.

And then there was the volume. *Time* magazine called him "trumpet-lunged." In later years, when Graham's preaching much more resembled an avuncular fireside chat, he admitted that in the beginning he preached very fast and very loud. Throughout, Graham clutched a large Bible, which he quoted rapidly, accurately, and frequently. In a Bible-steeped culture, that strategy—born of deep conviction that the Bible contains God's authoritative answer to every problem—added authority. At the end of these sermons, hundreds of men and women, who were (by photographic evidence) overwhelmingly white and middle class, steadily streamed forward to yield their lives to Christ.

But not at first.

SLOW START

The success of the Los Angeles revival has obscured our vision of how hard it was won. Despite concerts of prayer, meticulous organization, multiple neighborhood committees, and vast and intense publicity, the revival got off to a slow start. Initially, the committee scheduled it to run three weeks, from Sunday, September 25 to Sunday, October 16. In those weeks the crowds ran a respectable 2,000 to 3,000 per night, but since the tent seated more than 6,000, ushers spread out the chairs to make the audience look more substantial.

The local press paid little attention to the meetings. The committee placed ads, and neighborhood churches slipped in notices in their usual spots on the newspaper's church page, but otherwise the revival seemed destined to follow the path of most revivals: earnest support from the faithful for a few days, maybe a few weeks, but nothing to make the history books. Unseasonably cold weather did not help.



Toward the end of the third week, Graham, song leader Cliff Barrows, soloist George Beverly Shea, and the committee fell into consultation and prayer about whether the revival should continue past the scheduled closing date. Uncertain, they, like Gideon in the Old Testament, asked God for a palpable sign.

Their prayer yielded results. First, a spell of warm weather rolled in on October 16, the very day the revival had been scheduled to close. And then, on October 17, Stuart "Stew" Hamblen came to faith in an early morning meeting with Graham at the hotel where Graham and his wife, Ruth, were staying. Hamblen was a storied country performer, radio show host, and local celebrity. The following night he professed his faith publicly at the crusade. The next week Hamblen gave his testimony on his radio program. With this exposure, the crowds grew and the committee extended the crusade for two more weeks. Later, Hamblen would write the *Hit Parade* favorites "It Is No Secret (What God Can Do)" and "This Ole House" to herald his new birth.

KISSED BY A MEDIA MOGUL

The improved weather and Hamblen's well-publicized endorsement were powerfully reinforced early in the fourth week. One night, as Graham entered the tent, he found the scene swarming with reporters, flash bulbs popping, note pads open. Asked what was going on, one journalist told him, "You have been kissed by William Randolph Hearst."

In the next few days, the *Los Angeles Examiner* and the *Los Angeles Herald Express*, both owned by



FROM L.A. TO BOSTON After Los Angeles, Graham preached a rally in Boston. That event grew into an 18-day series, later capped by a massive meeting on Boston Common.

In any event, the reason for Hearst's interest was evident. The tycoon was fiercely pro-American and fiercely anticommunist. Less well known is that in some ways he was also progressive: a supporter of women's rights and an opponent of monopolistic business trusts and long work days—anything that exploited ordinary people. Most important, perhaps, he strongly supported a well-ordered society.

The need for a well-ordered society prompted Hearst to support YFC. The organization had emerged in the early 1940s, mainly in New York, Philadelphia, and especially Chicago. It aimed to provide “wholesome” entertainment, patriotic uplift, and evangelistic appeal to servicemen and women returned from military duty, as well as crowds of adolescents and young adults thronging city streets at night. Graham got his start in big city evangelism at a YFC rally at Orchestra Hall in Chicago, May 27, 1944, 10 days before D-Day. He stayed with YFC for about four years,

the publishing tycoon, showcased stories about Graham. Soon the Associated Press, United Press, and International News Service ran accounts too. *Time* entered the picture on November 14. *Time*'s cousin publication, *Life*, with 25 million readers, ran its own piece on November 21. The *Los Angeles Times* (not a Hearst paper) compared Graham—a “silvery-tongued young evangelist”—with Billy Sunday, the premier traveling pulpiteer of the previous generation. Graham and the press had found each other. Over the years Graham gained vast publicity from the press, and the press gained a steady source of revenue from stories about the affable, photogenic, and loquacious evangelist.

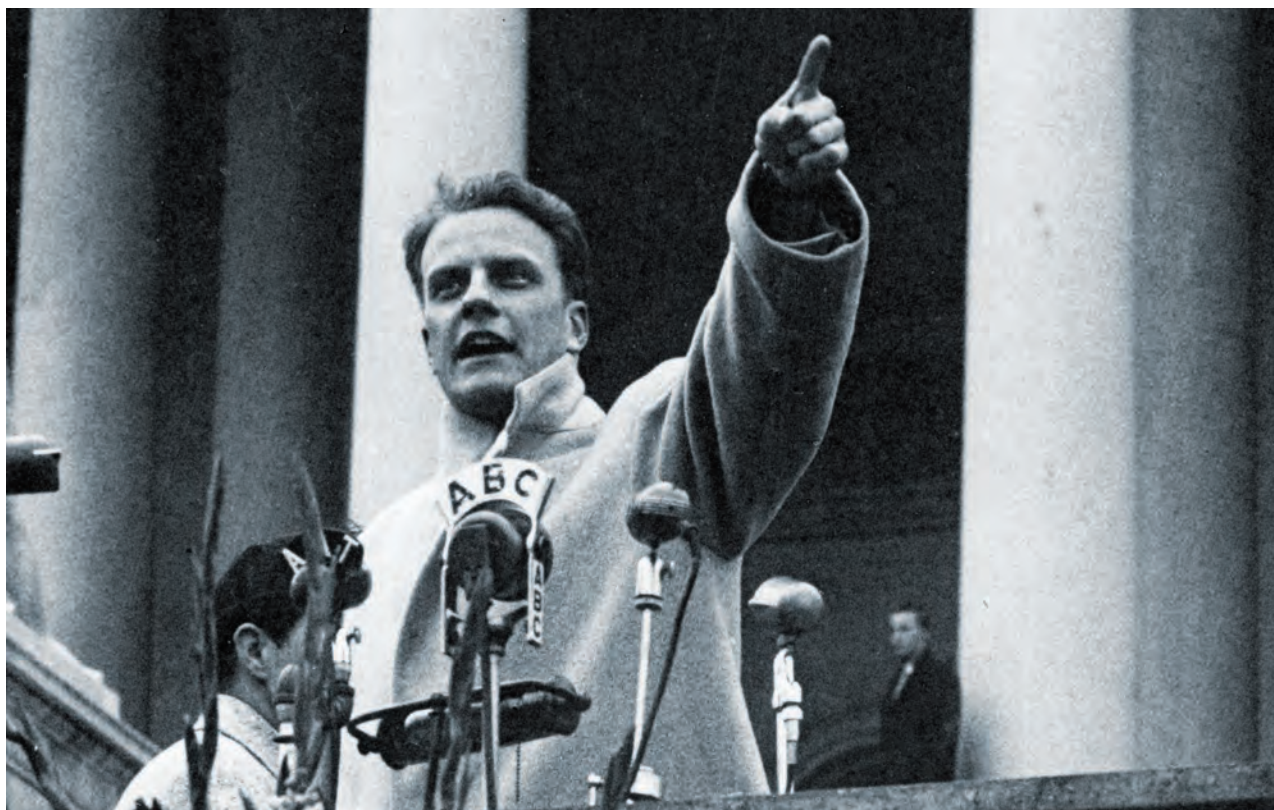
Folded into this story was another one, not important in itself, but one that gained importance for what it revealed about how legends develop and the impact they hold. Hearst was not known to be deeply religious, much less evangelical. So how did he hear about Graham, why did he decide to promote him, and how did he communicate this to his editors?

The answers to these questions remain murky. As to how Hearst heard about the revival, one story held that one of his housekeepers had told him about it, another that the Holy Spirit had directed the housekeeper to phone Hearst, and still another that Hearst caught wind of the meetings and came in disguise with his mistress, Marion Davies. The most credible narrative is that the committee had worked hard behind the scenes, through intermediaries, to win Hearst's attention.

gradually mixing YFC meetings with ones he organized on his own. By the 1949 Los Angeles meeting, Graham was entirely independent, but YFC had left its mark. His aggressive, flamboyant style and hard-hitting message had been forged on the anvil of YFC meetings in the United States and Europe.

Many people not notably religious, including President Truman and Hearst, liked YFC. Americans lived in perilous times, and YFC offered solutions. So it was not surprising that in 1946 Hearst sent a memo to his editors urging them to “Puff YFC” (CH emphasis). Stanley High's 1956 biography, *Billy Graham: The Personal Story of the Man, His Message, and His Mission*, seems the first instance in which a serious biographer claimed that Hearst had sent his reporters a directive to “Puff Graham.” Most subsequent biographies, including well-researched books by William McLoughlin (1960) and John Pollock (1966), picked up the tale. (Graham himself uncritically repeated it in his 1997 memoir.) In 1983, however, Patricia Cornwell's biography of Ruth Bell Graham cast serious doubt. No hard copy of the directive ever materialized, and Hearst's son denied it, claiming that his father probably had said, “[G]ive attention to Billy Graham's meetings.” William Martin's exhaustively researched biography (1991) offered additional reasons to question the story's veracity.

The “Puff Graham” tale not only amplified Hearst's role in Graham's rise, it also created an impression that Graham's Los Angeles crusade owed its success to a



random comment by a wealthy and powerful businessman who had a political and financial interest in the preacher's work. It erroneously implied that the revival tumbled from the sky like a sacred meteor. Rather, the "Watershed Revival of 1949" grew from intersecting streams of historical influence already well in place.

BORROWED SERMONS, BIGGER TENT

The committee extended the revival another week, and then another, and then one more, to a total of eight. Some people wanted it to go on indefinitely, but Graham had reached his limit. He had preached all the sermons he knew, started borrowing sermons from friends, and even replayed (with credit) Jonathan Edwards's eighteenth-century fire-breathing masterpiece, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." The tent had been enlarged to seat 9,000, and additional thousands stood outside. One night, near the end, 15,000 reportedly jammed onto the grounds.

The revival's energy drew also on additional celebrity conversions and the resulting publicity. Ranking at the top, perhaps, was the conversion of Louis Zamperini. An Olympic track star and decorated war hero (captured and tortured by the Japanese), his life had fallen apart after his return home. Facing divorce, alcoholism, and severe post-traumatic stress, he visited the tent sometime in the fifth week, found Christ, and spent the rest of his long life as a Christian inspirational speaker on forgiveness. He was slated to be Grand

D.C. TALK Two years after L.A., Graham's influence had grown so much that he was allowed to hold the first-ever revival meeting on the Capitol steps, February 3, 1952.

Marshall of the 2015 Tournament of Roses Parade when he died at age 97.

Why did the people come to the great tent in the first place? Graham was disarmingly candid. "People came to the meetings for all sorts of reasons," he allowed. Some of them were religious. "No doubt some were simply curious to see what was going on. Others were skeptical and dropped by just to confirm their prejudices. Many were desperate over some crisis in their lives and hoped they might get a last chance to set things right."

Whatever the reasons, thousands came to Christ for the first time. If the pattern in Los Angeles foreshadowed the pattern of later crusades—one well studied by historians and sociologists—a different reason proved equally important. Graham did not so much convert them to something wholly new, as call them back to something old. He touched their memories and reminded them of who they once were and who they now wished themselves to be, individually and collectively as a society. They, too, crossed a watershed. **[E]**

Grant Wacker is Gilbert T. Rowe Professor of Christian History at Duke Divinity School and author of America's Pastor: Billy Graham and the Shaping of a Nation.



“I would not call it show business”

Media made Billy Graham a celebrity; Graham worked hard to stay honest and authentic

ELESHA COFFMAN

DURING A 1973 APPEARANCE on the British talk show *Russell Harty Plus*, Billy Graham described the promise and peril of television ministry.

When Harty asked how Graham’s broadcast evangelism compared to the live preaching of John Wesley, Graham replied, “Television is a medium of face to face communication. It’s the most powerful medium we’ve ever known. And whether you’re selling a bar of soap or whatever you’re doing, television is the way to do it today. And if you are preaching the gospel, you can communicate by television.”

Graham stated that if he appeared on American TV for three nights, he would get 500,000 to 750,000 letters from viewers, “people pouring out their hearts and their problems.” Television could be used for evil, he explained, but it could also be used for good.

HALF-HOUR OF DECISION Billy Graham (with song leader Cliff Barrows) began a regular 30-minute television broadcast in 1951, when the medium was still young.

Later in the interview, Harty pressed the evangelist to name some pet peeves. Graham admitted that fame grew tiresome. “I’m happy to come to Europe once in a while where I can get a bit more privacy than in America where the television has made [my] face quite well known,” he said. Graham also joked with the host about his own aging countenance. The 55-year-old man on the screen no longer struck Graham as handsome, and he wished for Harty’s “marvelous” hair.

This interview illustrates three aspects of media-molded ministry—one positive, two negative. Graham’s use of media—especially the preeminent medium of the

DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL *Top right:* The original radio studio where *Hour of Decision* was recorded has been reconstructed at the Billy Graham Library.

SILVER SCREEN *Bottom right:* Poster for World Wide Pictures' coming-of-age evangelistic film, *Time to Run*.

latter twentieth century, television—was extremely effective. But success as a media figure could veer dangerously close to slick salesmanship. Additionally, celebrity took a toll on personal life, demanding large amounts of time and energy from Graham while privileging sound bites over sermons and image over substance.

TESTING THE MEDIA

Graham's career had been linked to mass media ever since newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst (according to a widely circulated legend) instructed his editors to pay attention to Graham during the 1949 Los Angeles crusade. To keep the momentum going, in November 1950 Graham launched the *Hour of Decision* radio program on 150 ABC stations. Just a few weeks into its run, the weekly broadcast was heard on 1,000 stations, and it topped all other religious programs in the Nielsen ratings. The program was still going under the new name Peace with God in 2014.

Graham experimented with a weekly televised version of *Hour of Decision*, but he quickly, and wisely, shut it down. Though Graham recognized the unique power of television, regular broadcasts proved both expensive and time consuming. (A constant need for raising funds would later contribute to the televangelist scandals of the 1970s and 1980s.) Graham's organization opted instead to purchase occasional airtime, mostly to broadcast crusades.

The success of the radio and occasional TV broadcasts led Graham into more media ventures. He launched the My Answer syndicated newspaper column to address recurrent questions from all those who poured their hearts out in letters. He founded World Wide Pictures, a studio whose full-length feature films often followed the narrative of a crusade testimony, complete with footage of Graham preaching. And he started *Decision* magazine, which also featured crusade testimonies and raised support for evangelism.

One media venture stood apart from the rest: *Christianity Today* magazine, launched in 1956. Unlike the press and broadcast efforts associated with

the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), the goal of *Christianity Today* was less to save souls (its early readers were clergy) than to establish evangelicalism as an intellectually worthy religious tradition.

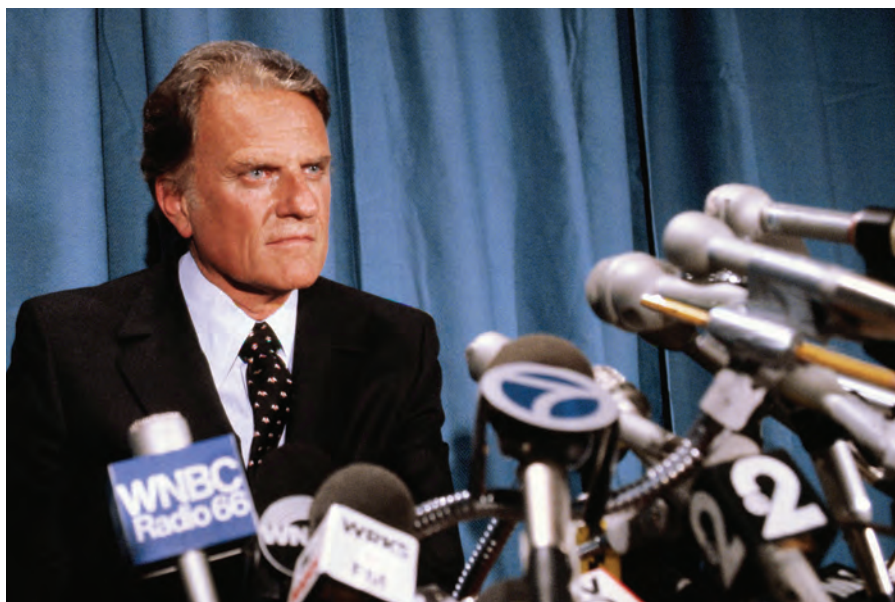
The magazine's first editor, Carl F. H. Henry, argued for a version of American Protestantism that was conservative on topics like the inerrancy of the Bible and the sovereignty of God but not rigid and reactionary like fundamentalism. *Christianity Today* put flesh on these bones, fitting in with other Graham-related institutions such as the National Association of Evangelicals and Fuller Seminary.

As even more new media technologies emerged, the BGEA harnessed them to extend the reach of Graham's evangelism. In 1993, back when the Internet was practically brand new, the 75-year-old Graham participated in an hour-long live chat on America Online. And in 1995, he built on a decade of experimenting with technology, using 30 satellites, 160 digital editing machines, and 13 generators, to transmit services from San Juan, Puerto Rico, to nearly 3,000 sites across the globe in an effort to reach a billion viewers—approximately one-fifth the population of the planet.

SUPERSTAR

Vast as it was, Graham's own universe of print and broadcast media did not encompass the whole of his media engagement. By the early 1970s Graham was a regular guest on mainstream TV talk shows and a frequent contributor to periodicals ranging from *Cosmo-*





MEET THE PRESS Fresh from the USSR in 1982, Graham responded to charges that the Russians deceived him about religious freedom.

Ministering in the public eye entailed dangers. A remark in an interview could create a firestorm, such as the time in 1975 when a comment taken out of context led to the headline "Billy Graham Backs Ordaining Homosexuals." He had actually said that homosexuals might be ordained if they repented, accepted Jesus, and were trained. Some reporters left out the parts about repentance and salvation.

Graham's press team tried to head off such problems by vetting reporters before they got to the

politan to *National Enquirer*. He also gave dozens of press conferences in cities around the world.

In some ways, Graham's celebrity was another example of how media extended his reach as an evangelist. During a legendary guest spot on Woody Allen's talk show in 1969, Graham advocated biblical morality as the foundation of a happy life, explained why idolatry is the worst sin, and even evangelized his host. "In God's sight, you are beautiful," Graham said. "He made you, Woody Allen, and he expects you to live up to a standard that he has made." Neither Allen nor his audience heard that kind of a message very often.

Press conferences served evangelistic purposes. Graham typically called a press conference to attract attention to an upcoming crusade. Staff made sure the details of the meeting would appear in the ensuing stories. Reporters allowed themselves to be used for free advertising because Graham fielded questions about current events, and his answers could make headlines.

An exchange from a 1975 press conference in Lubbock, Texas, illustrates Graham's ability both to use and be used by the media. "You know," Graham said, "one of the things about being a well-known clergyman or a well-known evangelist is I'm supposed to be an authority on every conceivable subject. And I'm not an authority on many subjects.... And there are a lot of the problems that we face today that I haven't figured out the answer to. Except if everybody would turn to God, everybody would turn to Christ, I think we could approach our problems with new attitudes."

Having delivered that come-to-Jesus line, Graham proceeded to answer questions about Betty Ford's views on sex and marijuana, college morality, Watergate, the Equal Rights Amendment, the Middle East, and the American divorce rate. He went on to fill the 48,000-seat Jones Stadium at Texas Tech University for a crusade.

evangelist and by cultivating relationships with sympathetic journalists. Even so, press conferences were not tightly scripted, and writers from a variety of perspectives gained access to Graham. Despite his strong objections to the publication, Graham even sat with a reporter for *Playboy* in 1970, though he demanded that the writer turn off his tape recorder.

RISKY BUSINESS

Graham also constantly ran the risk of the press labeling him a fraud. Following a 1972 documentary about Marjoe Gortner, a phony tent revivalist, reporters repeatedly asked Graham about his own finances and those of other evangelists. Graham reassured the public that the days of the fictional con-man preacher Elmer Gantry were gone, a claim that has, sadly, been refuted many times since he made it—though Graham himself scrupulously avoided financial or sexual scandal.

While he must have faced temptation to put on a show for the camera, or to alter his message for different audiences, Graham's media engagement was remarkable for its consistency and authenticity. In fact, broadcasting his crusades caused Graham to make his presentation more heartfelt, rather than flashier.

As he said in 1972, "We have no gimmicks because you cannot fool the electronic eye of that camera and people can see whether you're sincere or not. It is true that our crusades are partially designed because of the cameras. We have to... have excellent personnel who do the singing and the music... I suppose in that way we have adapted ourselves to television, but I would not call it show business." □

Elesha Coffman is assistant professor of church history at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary and a former managing editor of Christian History.



“Go forth to every part of the world”

Billy Graham's early missions to Europe helped shape a global evangelical movement

UTA ANDREA BALBIER

ON MARCH 19, 1946, leading US newspapers published an image of five members of Youth for Christ (YFC) kneeling in prayer in front of an American Airlines plane. Among the five young men in the picture was 27-year-old Billy Graham. The plane took the young evangelist on his first missionary trip to Europe. It was the first ever commercial flight from Chicago to London, and the Youth for Christ team took advantage of the publicity surrounding this historic event.

Together with fellow evangelists Chuck Templeton, YFC president Torrey Johnson, and song leader Stratton Shufelt, Graham set out on a 46-day tour to Britain and Europe. Graham returned in fall of the same year for another six months. Then in 1948 he went back to Europe for more YFC rallies and to attend YFC's Congress on World Evangelization in Beatenberg, Switzerland.

That meeting exposed him to some 250 other delegates attracted by the theme “The Evangelization of the World in Our Generation.” Even though the YFC movement was still predominantly American,

BON VOYAGE A Youth for Christ team departs Chicago for their first European tour. *From left: Torrey Johnson, Charles Templeton, Stratton Shufelt, and Billy Graham.*

delegates came from 46 nations—from as far away as China, Egypt, India, and the Philippines. These young missionaries realized that the new global reach of communication, broadcasting, and air travel would alter the very nature of missionary work in the second half of the twentieth century. Thus, through his early work with Youth for Christ, Graham became part of a new, young international community of evangelists.

These European travels took place during the three years before Graham came to national prominence during his 1949 Los Angeles campaign. These early experiences abroad significantly shaped Billy Graham. As his biographer William Martin wrote, meetings with influential religious individuals, such as the young Welsh evangelist Stephen Olford, had a significant impact on Graham's faith and his preaching style.



FOND FAREWELL *Left:* In June 1954 English crowds wish a beaming Billy Graham well as he departs for meetings in Sweden and four other countries following his landmark 12-week crusade in London's Harringay Arena. *Below:* Tickets from the 1967 Tokyo Crusade, one of eight the evangelist has held in Japan. Graham planted seeds for this crusade in 1956 with meetings in Tokyo, Yokohama, and Osaka.



Seeing the hopelessness and despair of postwar Europe also made a strong impact on the young preacher. Graham saw destruction, hunger, and many people who had lost their faith during the hardship of the war years. His revivalist theology, his machine-gun-like preaching, and his loud neckties all drew opposition from British church officials. In Birmingham, England, the local clergy even persuaded the city fathers to revoke permission to use the civic auditorium. Graham responded to their opposition by personally meeting with his critics and winning them over. All these experiences seem to have strengthened Graham's faith, and his preaching became more intense. During this time, he decided to dedicate an important part of his career to re-Christianizing Europe.

A LIFE COMMITMENT

Graham's dedication to the re-Christianization of Europe became a lifelong commitment. Even after his rise to national fame in the United States, he dedicated a significant amount of his missionary time to Europe. In spring 1954 he held his first three-month revival meeting in London, then the largest city on Earth. The crusade confronted Graham's team with significant logistical challenges, but at the same time prepared them for future campaigns in other metropolises such as New York and Berlin.

After his successful time in London, with a closing service held at Wembley Stadium which attracted 120,000, he traveled to the Netherlands, Germany, Scandinavia, and France. His first revival service at the

Olympic Stadium in Berlin in June 1954 attracted an audience of 80,000 and laid the groundwork for a close and lasting relationship between Billy Graham and German Christians. He would return to the country for campaigns—some shorter, some longer—in 1955, 1960, 1963, 1966, 1970, 1982, 1990, and 1993.

By 1954 the European religious, political, and economic landscape had changed significantly since Graham's first trip to the British Isles only one year after the end of World War II. In particular, Germany and the United Kingdom had formed a close relationship with the United States. Graham's strong anticommunism resonated particularly well with audiences in West Germany, and Germans embraced the evangelist as an ambassador of the Free World. For European consumers Graham's image as a healthy, middle-class American became an attractive symbol of the American way of life. But Graham also profited from new support through the established churches. Secularization fears and re-Christianization hopes made leading European religious figures take their seats next to Graham on the speaker's platform during his revivals. Archbishop of Canterbury Geoffrey Fisher joined him in London, while Bishop Otto Dibelius of Berlin-Brandenburg offered the closing prayer at Berlin's Olympic Stadium.

By the mid-1950s, Billy Graham had traveled Europe and Asia to spread the gospel, and his international outreach began to shape his domestic crusades. The New York Crusade, which opened at Madison Square Garden on May 15, 1957, incorporated and displayed the international dimension of Graham's work. Even though Madison Square Garden was decorated in



American colors, with American flags hanging from the ceiling, the crusade was important not just to American Christians. By April 1957 around 7,000 prayer groups had formed worldwide. Many of these were based in cities where Graham had preached before.

Letters published in the New York Crusade newsletter reported that people in London, Basel, Mexico City, Havana, Hong Kong, and Tokyo were praying for the crusade. In Britain alone over 1,000 prayer partners gathered in groups. Through prayer the crusade audiences that gathered at different times and on different sides of the globe blended into one global evangelical community. As the Reverend Joseph Blinco, a British evangelist who joined Graham during the New York Crusade, observed: "The shortest route to New York from any point of the world is not by the magnificent air lines that serve this fantastic age, but through the heart of God on the wings of prayer."

Blinco was not the only "foreigner" who joined Graham in New York. Other British Christians who had experienced Graham's work in England in 1954 and 1955 flew to New York to participate in the crusade. Irene Hicks, for example, worked for Harrods in London and had accepted Christ during the London Crusade. She happened to be on a business trip to New York and gave a public testimony at the New York Crusade.

It became obvious that Graham's team was willing to learn from their British brothers and sisters when they used an outreach tool known as "Operation Andrew." Operation Andrew (OA) involved churches chartering buses to take their members and, more importantly, friends of their members to the crusades. OA was the brainchild of British evangelicals who organized the London Crusade in 1954 where it was born of necessity. In New York Graham's team adapted to the American context and used it to connect suburbs with the urban center. In the *New York Crusade News* of May 1957, Walter H. Smyth, director of the crusade's group reservations

BERLIN CALL Above: Graham talks with Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie at the 1966 World Congress on Evangelism. Right: German magazine *Der Spiegel* devoted its June 23, 1954, cover story to "Religion for Mass Consumption." The article compared Graham's altar calls to selling washing machines.



department, encouraged churches to use Operation Andrew. "The effectiveness of this plan as a soul-winning effort cannot be over-emphasized," he wrote.

A GLOBAL VISION

The boundaries between Graham's national and international work eventually blurred, and he became the face and focus of an increasingly international evangelical community. The international evangelical meetings Graham took part in expanded the global reach of his organization. They also created a new international evangelical network.

In 1966 Graham gave the keynote address at the World Congress on Evangelism, which was organized by *Christianity Today* and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and was held in Berlin after yet another successful Graham campaign in England and Germany. The congress attracted a significantly larger and more international community than the one that had met at Beatenberg 20 years earlier. Around 4,000 Christian leaders from 100 different countries went to Berlin including Haile Selassie, the emperor of Ethiopia.

In his speech "Why the Berlin Congress?" Graham revealed not just his global vision for evangelism, but showed also a detailed knowledge of the global challenges of that decade when he addressed

overpopulation, poverty, and racial struggles. Billy Graham had seen these problems firsthand during his many trips abroad, and he had the authority to discuss them at the congress. It became clear in his speech just how much his own global encounters had changed Graham. The evangelist, often criticized for his focus on personal conversion rather than social activism, said, "Today, the evangelist cannot ignore the diseased, the poor, the discriminated against, and those who have lost their freedom through tyranny. These social evils cry loudly in our ears, and we, too, must 'have compassion on them.'" How to balance evangelism and social responsibility was much debated in evangelical circles in the 1960s and 1970s.

The question also featured prominently in the discussions eight years later, when 2,700 delegates from 150 countries answered Billy Graham's invitation to the 1974 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization. The meeting gave birth to the Lausanne Movement, an umbrella organization

of evangelical Christians worldwide. The diversity of these delegates proved that the world had become smaller. Dynamic new evangelical players joined from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The Lausanne Congress highlighted evangelicalism's new global identity and also displayed the significantly increased global knowledge in evangelical missionary circles. When delegates discussed the concept of "unreached people" as the focus of future missionary work, they did so now based on expert knowledge, maps, and data. Evangelical missionaries had traveled the globe for centuries, but they now developed a more analytical understanding of the challenges ahead. This became concrete when the Lausanne steering committee commissioned a report on the state of Christianity in every country of the world.

The global community present at Lausanne was the fruit of seeds planted by YFC's international campaigns and the crusades that Graham had held on

A citizen of the world

AN INTERVIEW WITH LEIGHTON FORD



Leighton Ford was an associate evangelist for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association for 30 years and observed the growth of Billy Graham's international ministry firsthand. He went on to chair the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and to found Leighton Ford Ministries, which focuses on developing the next generation of leaders. Dr. Ford's wife, Jean, is Billy Graham's younger sister. Matt Forster asked Dr. Ford how he saw Billy Graham grow in international ministry over the years.

IN THE LATE 1960S, I was speaking at Duke Divinity School's chapel when someone asked me, "How have you seen Billy Graham's mind change across the years?" The image of an arrow came to me. Billy Graham has been like an arrowhead—sharp at the point, broad at

NEW COVENANT In 1974 Anglican bishop Jack Dain joined Billy Graham in signing the Lausanne Covenant. As Lausanne's honorary executive chair, Bishop Dain pressed Graham to give social ministry a place alongside evangelism in the Lausanne Movement's agenda.

the base, and with a deep shaft. The point has always been the gospel, always Christ—whether he's speaking to a great stadium or university group or a group of scientists or whatever. Like the base of an arrowhead, the implications of his gospel broadened through the years: in terms of racial justice and poverty, in terms of relationships between churches and nations, in terms of nuclear war. Then, like the shaft of an arrow, he kept going deep—deep into the Word, deep into God.

The amazing thing is that this young fellow from the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in the farmlands of North Carolina became a citizen of the world and an ambassador to the world. Billy Graham stands in the heritage of Zinzendorf, who said, "I would go anywhere and do anything for the evangelization of the world and the unity of Christ's church."


His early days with Youth for Christ after the war took him to England. His early preaching and making contacts there broadened him beyond the United States. That time in England was very important, and during the 1954 Harringay crusade in London, he became an Anglophile. He loved the Anglican Church. I wouldn't be surprised if parts of his Baptist heart had bits of Anglican in it.



all five continents in the 1950s and 1960s. They were closely knit by air travel, the rise of international media, and ever faster communication technology. They were nourished by the shared memory and experience of Billy Graham's international campaign work, while growing closer through the global practice of prayer.

Graham eventually preached evangelistic messages in 49 countries. His international outreach is often underestimated in the United States, and many US evangelicals don't understand the ways his global

FOREST PRIMEVAL In the first three months of 1960, Graham preached in nine African countries. Here the evangelist meditates in a Nigerian rain forest. Graham visited Jordan and Israel on his way home.

ministry both transformed him as an evangelist and shaped his work in his home country. 

Uta Balbier is director of the Institute of North American Studies at King's College London. Her research focuses on US and transnational religious history.

Billy learned through people. Jack Dain, for example, was very important in his life. Jack had been a missionary in Pakistan. He had led the India-focused Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship. He had been a missions leader and bishop in Australia. And Billy certainly learned a lot from him about India and Asia.

His friend Don Hoke, whom he knew from college days at Wheaton and who had been a missionary in Japan, was a great help to him on matters relating to Asia. Robert Evans, who founded Greater Europe Mission, a friend from Youth for Christ days, informed him about what was going on in Europe. In the United Kingdom, there was John Stott and also Arthur Goodwin Hudson and Hugh Gough, both of whom went on to be bishops in Australia. There was Billy Kim in Korea and Peter Schneider in Germany. He relied a great deal on these friends and the fact that they lived in and knew well these places.

I also think dealing with the press was very important. Going to a London pub in 1954 and sitting down with one of the best-known columnists of the day and taking questions was a very important learning experience.

Billy's curiosity, his willingness to ask questions, to be humble, and learn from others was very typical of him. He was trained in anthropology and Bible. His uptake on cultural things was pretty savvy.

A pattern developed in the international crusades that an associate evangelist—such as myself—would go to a city or country ahead of time and preach for a week or two at the same venues. Then Billy would come and, of course, crowds would explode when he came on the scene. We did that in Latin America; we did it

in Africa; I did it in parts of French-speaking Europe. It wasn't just Billy dropping in for two or three days. His preaching was part of a longer and deeper outreach.

People who were there ahead of time would send him a briefing book to give him background on the country, the city, the leadership, and so forth. Often that would come from his crusade directors.

We had some interesting experiences. In Accra, Ghana, they told us, "Don't give the same invitation you give in North America, because if you ask people to come forward, everybody will come. They want to see the evangelist from overseas.

"Instead," they said, "ask people who sense God is speaking to them to wait behind and then you can counsel with those who want to receive Christ."

The first night in the brand new Freedom and Independence Stadium in Accra, Billy threw caution to the winds and gave his usual invitation. Half the stadium started to come forward. He suddenly realized what was happening, and he said, "No, no, no, no. Stop, you don't understand. Go back, go back."

Off to one side, I saw a policeman with a billy club actually beating some of the people who were coming forward and sending them back to their seats. And I said, "No one's ever going to be able to say that Billy Graham makes it too easy to come to Christ."

So he learned and changed his approach for the rest of the meetings.

Matt Forster is a journalist in Clarkston, Michigan.



LEIGHTON FORD



Confessor-in-chief

Billy Graham shared the spotlight—and moments of intimate prayer—with more presidents than any other Christian leader

STEPHEN RANKIN

IN JULY 1950 31-year-old Billy Graham and three associates met with President Harry Truman. Unschooled in presidential protocol, they offended Truman by spilling the contents of their conversation to a waiting press. They then agreed to a much-

photographed prayer session on the White House lawn. As Graham's fame spread and Democratic leaders noted his influence, Truman persistently refused further contact. He referred to Graham as "one of those counterfeits. He claims he's a friend of all Presidents, but he was never a friend of mine when I was President." Only much later did the two men find a modicum of reconciliation.

No one could have predicted that this first disastrous encounter with a president would establish an unparalleled legacy. Billy Graham stood in the glare of public scrutiny with US presidents and other heads of state more than any other Christian leader. Their friendships gave him unprecedented opportunity for spiritual influence that also came with great risk. It is

easy to cross the line between pastoral presence and political partisanship, and several times during his storied life, Billy Graham had to redraw that line.

Graham met Dwight Eisenhower not long before Ike became the Republican nominee in 1952, but it took some special effort. A mutual friend encouraged their meeting and suggested that Graham give Eisenhower advice about how to "contribute a religious note" to his campaign speeches. The relationship soon took off, giving Graham opportunity for pastoral conversations.

Graham's interactions with Eisenhower foreshadowed a regular pattern. Most conversations revolved around personal spiritual concerns and prayer, but in critical moments, a president would ask Graham's perspective. When Arkansas governor Orval Faubus defied a federal order for African American students to integrate Little Rock High School, Eisenhower sought Graham's advice about sending federal troops. "Mr. President," he responded, "I think that is the only thing you can do."

WE BOW BEFORE THEE *Left:* After a visit with Harry Truman, Graham and friends show reporters how they prayed with the president.

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS *Right:* In 1971 President Nixon takes the platform for Honor Billy Graham Day in Charlotte, NC. Graham had prayed to open a rally for Nixon in 1960.

As Eisenhower's trust in Graham deepened, he opened the door for personal concerns. After his first heart attack, he called Graham for pastoral conversation. He asked about heaven and admitted his lack of assurance. In 1968 he sought Graham's help to reconcile with Richard Nixon.

This pattern of pastoral care with occasional forays into strategic matters became a temptation too great for Graham to resist. By the time Nixon made his first run for the presidency, he and Graham were fast friends, provoking Graham's first serious temptation to political partisanship. John Kennedy's Catholicism complicated the 1960 campaign. Other Protestant leaders like Norman Vincent Peale had made openly anti-Catholic statements in support of Nixon. Graham was by then a personal friend of Cardinal Francis Spellman and did not want to get caught in that controversy. Henry Luce, *Time's* editor-in-chief, asked him to write a testimonial on behalf of Nixon. He did, then regretted it and asked Luce not to use it, narrowly avoiding a serious breach of his nonpartisanship rule.

When Kennedy defeated Nixon, Graham took it as God's sovereign guidance that religious differences should not cause political divisions. Kennedy's father, Joe, recognized the need for a good relationship with the Protestant evangelist and encouraged the president's staff to arrange a meeting. When the day came, Kennedy had questions about the second coming of Christ, admitting it was a doctrine his church did not emphasize. He and Graham agreed to have a follow-up conversation that was fated never to happen.

THE SLEEPLESS PRESIDENT

In the wake of Kennedy's assassination, Billy Graham and Lyndon Johnson forged a lasting friendship. Had Graham succumbed, however, to the temptation to run for president, the friendship might never have developed. In 1964 the prospect of a Graham candidacy had a brief moment of life. Texas oil baron H. L. Hunt offered Graham \$6 million to run. It was a real temptation, but he quickly resisted it.

A telegram of pastoral support from Graham to Johnson shortly after Johnson took office prompted an invitation to the White House. On more than 20 occasions, Graham, often accompanied by Ruth, was a guest.



He also made numerous visits to the Johnson ranch in Texas. They often had spiritual conversations and prayer, occasionally in the middle of the night when the sleepless president wanted company and counsel. Johnson struggled with doubts about his salvation. On one of many car rides around the ranch, he parked the car and asked Graham to share the gospel with him once again.

Johnson also engaged Graham in social matters. In 1965 he asked him to go to Selma, Alabama, to help calm a desperately tense situation along with the placement of troops to protect the freedom marchers. Graham went.

After leaving office Johnson voiced the significance of Graham's support: "No one will ever know how you helped to lighten my load or how much warmth you brought into our house. But I know." Graham reminisced, "Although many have commented on his complex character, perhaps I saw a side of that complexity that others did not see, for LBJ had a sincere and deeply felt, if simple, spiritual dimension."

Johnson's decision not to run for re-election in 1968 freed Graham to support his old friend Richard Nixon. Nixon credited him more than any other person for his decision to pursue the presidency again. Nixon remembered Graham telling him: "If you don't run, you'll worry for the rest of your life whether you should have, won't you?"

In Nixon's 1972 re-election bid, Graham, by his own admission, overstepped his boundaries. H. R. Haldeman mentioned several occasions when Graham participated directly in campaign strategy. When word of the Watergate scandal broke, Graham could not believe that his friend knew about it or took part in the cover-up. Not until a *Christianity Today* interview in early 1974 did Graham acknowledge that Nixon had made mistakes, though he continued to believe that Nixon would be exonerated.



CIVIL RIGHTS *Left:* After police beat civil rights marchers in Alabama, President Johnson asked Graham to help restore calm. Graham responded by preaching in three key Alabama cities.

Graham found another long-time friend in Ronald Reagan. He saw Reagan as a man of “quick wit and warm personality,” and he respected “his insight and tough-minded approach to broad political issues.” Despite the renewal of Cold War tensions in the 1980s, Graham dreamed of preaching the gospel behind

the Iron Curtain. Through a complicated and persistent strategy and with diplomatic influence, he realized that dream in 1982. Having the president of the United States as a close friend helped dramatically.

GULF WAR BLESSING

Billy Graham’s relationship with the Bush family was almost three decades old by the time George H. W. Bush became vice president, and it became even closer as Bush made his run for the Oval Office. By the late 1980s, the “evangelical vote” had become very desirable, and this fact complicated their relationship. The staunchly Episcopalian Bush did not know how to present himself to evangelicals. He studiously avoided using Billy Graham for political gain, but also depended on him to understand this powerful voting bloc.

The Bushes deeply appreciated Graham’s transparent faith and fruitful ministry. They began inviting him to Kennebunkport for family gatherings. He often fielded questions about the Bible in after-dinner conversations. During one such session in August 1985, the topic of being born again arose, which caught the attention of George and Barbara’s eldest son, George W. Bush. The following day he and Graham took a walk on the beach. His presidential memoir credits that conversation as the significant turning point in his spiritual life.

By 1990 America appeared headed toward war in the Persian Gulf. In contrast to criticisms from prominent liberal clergy, Graham voiced public support for Bush’s policies. He also provided private support. When the war began in January 1991, Graham was a guest in the White House. Barbara Bush invited him to watch television with her that day, and he quickly realized that she wanted him with her as the war began. The president joined them, and Graham offered prayer. Years later, Bush said, “We wanted Billy Graham by our side.”

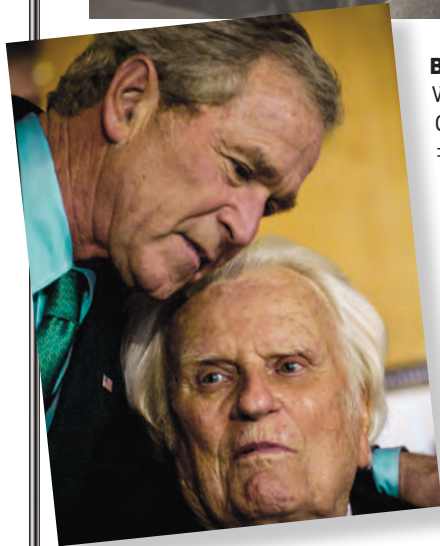
BORN-AGAIN BUSH *Left:* George W. Bush hugs a 92-year-old Graham at a 2010 book signing.

When Graham read through the Watergate transcripts, he saw the gravity of Nixon’s misdeeds. Biographer William Martin wrote: “What he found there devastated him. He wept. He threw up. And he almost lost his innocence about Richard Nixon.”

Nixon’s pervasive profanity repulsed Graham.

Eventually, Nixon’s deceptions got to him too: “I’d never heard him tell a lie. But then the way it sounded in those tapes—it was all something totally foreign to me in him. He was just somebody else.” Years later he acknowledged, “Nixon’s candidacy . . . muffled those inner monitors that had warned me for years to stay out of partisan politics. I could not completely distance myself from the electoral process that was involving such a close friend.”

In the crisis Billy Graham responded to critics with characteristic generosity and recommitted himself to nonpartisanship. Two comparatively brief presidencies gave him time to regroup. Though he knew Gerald Ford, he was careful to keep his distance. When he held a crusade in Pontiac, Michigan (Ford’s home state), Graham chose not to invite him to speak from the platform (a mistake he had made with Nixon). Ford did consult with Graham about pardoning Nixon, something Graham said was in the best interest of the country. He did not develop a close friendship with fellow Southern Baptist Jimmy Carter, though they both spoke later of strong mutual respect.



PRIVATE GENERAL *Top:* Graham urged Dwight Eisenhower to make his faith public. Ike was baptized just 12 days into his first term.

FIRST CATHOLIC PRESIDENT *Right:* John F. Kennedy met briefly with Graham, but an assassin sidetracked plans for future talks.

GOSPEL FOR THE GIPPER *Right:* After the March 1980 attempt on President Reagan's life, Graham flew to DC to pray with the First Lady.

AND OBAMA MAKES 12 *Bottom:* In 2010 Barack Obama became the first sitting president to visit Billy Graham in his home.



DIPLOMATIC COURIER

Bill Clinton often credited Graham's insistence on racially integrated crusades, which Clinton witnessed in Little Rock as a boy, as a significant factor in his decision to enter public service. As governor of Arkansas, he met Graham at the National Governor's Conference in 1985. At Clinton's inauguration in January 1993, Billy Graham offered prayer.


Clinton, like others before him, reached out to the evangelist for more than personal help. When Graham told the White House that he intended to visit North Korea in 1994, President Clinton engaged him to help ease tensions with Kim Il-Sung's regime. Graham met with Kim as a kind of courier between heads of state.

Graham's pastoral care for Clinton did not waver through the president's highly publicized moral failings. In Graham's memoir, *Just As I Am*, published at the end of Clinton's first term, his pastoral compassion shone through as he described a conversation with Clinton: "It was a time of warm fellowship with a man who has not always won the approval of his fellow Christians but who has in his heart a desire to serve God and do His will."

Perhaps because of the role Graham had played in George W. Bush's spiritual renewal, he bent his rule about endorsements. On the cusp of Election Day 2000, news media fixed on Bush's earlier problems with alcohol and irresponsible behavior. He was campaigning in Florida, and Graham was preaching a crusade there. A private conversation between them produced a public photo of candidate Bush with the evangelist. It could not have come at a better moment. We remember the 2000 election for "hanging chads" and its long-delayed resolution. Who can tell what this public moment with Billy Graham meant for Bush's election?

In April 2010 President Obama visited Billy Graham at his Montreat home, making it 12 presidents that Graham has known and for whom he has prayed. By that time, Graham's strength had waned and his public appearances had ceased, yet his influence remained strong. As a Christian leader he entered extensively into



the circles of power and through all exemplified commitment to principle coupled with transparency. During a *Newsweek* interview in 2006, Graham offered this judgment: "Much of my life has been a pilgrimage—constantly learning, changing, growing and maturing." The record reveals the truth of these words. 

Stephen Rankin is chaplain of Southern Methodist University and author of Aiming at Maturity: The Goal of the Christian Life.

The Life and Ministry of Billy Graham

1940

1950

1960

1970



NOVEMBER 11, 1918, FIRST WORLD WAR ENDS. JUBILATION SWEEPS FRANCE. BILLY GRAHAM IS FOUR DAYS OLD.

- 1918 – Born near Charlotte, North Carolina, to William and Morrow Graham.
- 1934 – Is converted at Mor-decai Ham revival.
- 1939 – Is ordained as Southern Baptist minister.
- 1940 – Enrolls at Wheaton College.
- 1943 – Marries Ruth Bell.
- 1943 – Begins pastorate at Western Springs Baptist Church.
- 1944 – Recruits singer George Beverly Shea.



1944, ALLIED TROOPS INVADE NORMANDY. GRAHAM'S PLANS TO BECOME MILITARY CHAPLAIN ARE THWARTED BY MUMPS.

- 1944 – Becomes evangelist with Youth for Christ.
- 1947 – Accepts W. B. Riley's invitation to lead Northwestern Schools in Minnesota.
- 1948 – Formulates "Modesto Manifesto," the crusade team's ethical charter.
- 1949 – After crisis of faith at Forest Home Bible Conference, recommits himself to the trustworthiness of Scripture.
- 1949 – Extends Christ for Greater Los Angeles revival to eight weeks; garners major press attention.



1955, POLIO VACCINE A SUCCESS. GRAHAM ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR NEW YORK CRUSADE.

- 1950 – Holds groundbreaking New Year's meetings in Boston.
- 1950 – In Columbia, South Carolina, dubs meetings "crusades" for the first time.
- 1950 – Incorporates Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.
- 1950 – Begins *Hour of Decision* radio broadcast.

- 1952 – Resigns presidency of Northwestern Schools.
- 1952 – Holds Christmas services for troops at Korean front lines.
- 1953 – Removes ropes separating blacks and whites at Chattanooga Crusade.
- 1954 – Holds Greater London Crusade; preaches also in Finland, Sweden, Germany, Netherlands, France.
- 1956 – Launches *Christianity Today* magazine.
- 1957 – Holds crusade in Madison Square Garden for unprecedented 16 weeks; welcomes Martin Luther King Jr. to his platform.
- 1960 – Gives invocation at political rally for Richard Nixon.
- 1965 – President Lyndon Johnson attends Houston Crusade.



1965, RELIGIOUS LEADERS MARCH FOR CIVIL RIGHTS. IN ALABAMA GRAHAM PLEADS FOR CALM.



1973, DEMONSTRATORS CALL FOR IMPEACHMENT OF RICHARD NIXON, GRAHAM'S PERSONAL FRIEND.

- 1966 – Gives keynote address at World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin.
- 1969 – Shares Lyndon Johnson's last night in the White House; holds first White House church service for Richard Nixon.
- 1973 – Holds integrated evangelistic meetings in South Africa.
- 1973 – After Key '73 controversy over plans to convert Jews, says he does not feel called to target Jews in evangelism.
- 1974 – Convenes International Conference on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland.
- 1977 – Receives National Interreligious Award from American Jewish Committee.
- 1980 – Billy Graham Center dedicated at Wheaton College.

1980

1990

2000

2010

- 1982 – During USSR trip, says there is “a measure of religious freedom” there; controversy erupts.
- 1982 – Receives Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion.
- 1985 – Discusses being born again with George W. Bush while vacationing at Kennebunkport; future president is converted.
- 1986 – Holds Amsterdam Conference for Itinerant Evangelists.
- 1989 – Prays at inauguration of George H. W. Bush.
- 1989 – Holds Mission '89 in London; meets top British leaders.
- 1989 – Receives star on Hollywood Walk of Fame.
- 1991 – Spends night before Operation Desert Storm begins with George and Barbara Bush.



1987, RONALD REAGAN TO SOVIETS: TEAR DOWN BERLIN WALL. GRAHAM PLANS 1988 USSR VISIT.



1995, OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING KILLS 186. GRAHAM PREACHES AT TELEVISED MEMORIAL SERVICE.

- 1991 – Holds Buenos Aires Crusade as part of television and video outreach to 20 countries.
- 1992 – Visits North Korea; lectures at Kim Il-Sung University.
- 1992 – Holds Moscow Crusade; preaches in Moscow Central Baptist Church.
- 1993 – Spends last night of George H. W. Bush's presidency in the White House; prays next day at first inauguration of President Bill Clinton.
- 1993 – Holds Pro-Christ crusade in Germany, reaching largest audience yet through satellite.
- 1994 – Visits Japan, China, and North Korea; attends house church in Beijing.
- 1994 – Preaches funeral service for President Richard M. Nixon.

- 1995 – Expands evangelistic audience through technology to as many as 1 billion during Puerto Rico Crusade.
- 1995 – Speaks at memorial service following Oklahoma City bombing.
- 1995 – Collapses just before Toronto Crusade; announces that son Franklin will replace him when he dies or becomes incapacitated.

- 1996 – Receives Congressional Gold Medal together with Ruth Bell Graham.

- 1998 – Addresses TED conference on technology and spirituality.

- 2000 – Convenes Amsterdam Conference for 10,000 evangelists. Illness prevents him from attending.

- 2001 – Franklin stands in for his indisposed father at George W. Bush's inauguration.



2001, 19 JIHADISTS KILL 2,958 IN 9/11 ATTACKS. GRAHAM PREACHES AT NATIONAL MEMORIAL SERVICE.

- 2001 – Preaches at post-9/11 service at National Cathedral.

- 2002 – Anti-Jewish comments from tapes of 1972 conversation with Richard Nixon made public. Graham apologizes, mends fences with Jewish leaders.



2011, EGYPTIANS OVERTHROW PRESIDENT MUBARAK. AGING GRAHAM PUBLISHES NEARING HOME.

- 2005 – Holds “last crusade” in New York City.
- 2007 – Billy Graham Library opens in Charlotte, NC.
- 2007 – Ruth Bell Graham dies.
- 2010 – Prays with Barack Obama in his Montreat home.
- 2012 – Meets with Mitt Romney.
- 2013 – Marks 95th birthday with My Hope digital and home-based evangelistic campaign; 22,000 churches participate.
- 2013 – Singer George Beverly Shea, Graham's first team member, dies at age 104.



Mama was “a real theologian”

In marrying Ruth Bell, Billy Graham acquired a strong-willed partner, a shrewd father-in-law, and a heritage of Presbyterian purposefulness

ANNE BLUE WILLS

“RUTH AND I DON’T HAVE a perfect marriage, but we have a great one,” wrote Billy Graham in the closing pages of *Just as I Am*, his 1997 autobiography.

Billy grew up on a dairy farm and moved from the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church into the raucous world of mid-twentieth-century Protestant revivalism. Ruth was born and reared on a Chinese mission field dominated by southern Presbyterians. As his wife of more than 60 years, Ruth shaped him in the myriad untraceable ways that any spouse shapes a partner. A close look at how these two worked out the practical and theological give-and-take of their commitment and forged a life together reveals more about Billy and Ruth than most people have known. Their marriage reflected their mutual love, but also their working partnership. In addition, Ruth proved to be a generational link: she infused Billy’s work with her father’s influence and molded their elder son’s vision in a way that may permanently reshape the Graham legacy.

Early in their marriage, Billy committed a now storied newlywed blunder by accepting a call to pastor a church without consulting Ruth. The 1943 event marked a turning point on his learning curve as a husband. Ruth had never wanted to be a traditional pastor’s wife—a role that historically subjected women to public scrutiny but brought them little public power

WE’LL TAKE MANHATTAN In 1958 Ruth Graham joined her husband in New York City for the record-setting 16-week crusade in Madison Square Garden.

or tangible reward. And she did not believe that her calling included Billy’s pastoral role at Western Springs Baptist Church, not far from Wheaton College where the pair had met. But she did feel called to evangelism, and she worked with him on evangelistic projects such as the Sunday evening radio program, *Songs in the Night*, broadcast from the church’s basement.

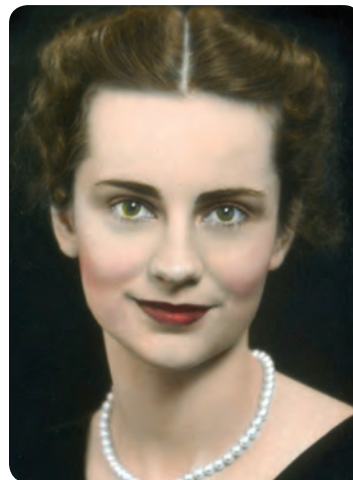
As they grew together in marriage, Billy came to rely on her more as a trusted adviser than as an accessory, a reliance that crossed public and private lines.

Ruth’s voracious reading habits and creative eye supplied Billy with sermon illustrations and references to contemporary culture for his writing. He claimed that they cowrote his first major book, *Peace with God* (1953), after they discovered that the ghostwriter hired by the publisher was out of her depth. Ruth seems to have singlehandedly revised the book for its 1984 edition, plowing plenty of illustrations into the text which were drawn from the world of technological progress—like NASA’s shuttle program—while sharpening criticisms of the nation’s moral decay, as epitomized by the “blasphemous words of punk rock.”



GOOD-BYE KISS *Left:* A familiar scene in the Graham home: Gigi remembers Daddy kissing Mother “warmly and firmly” and the children “dreading—another long separation.”

PRETTY IN PEARLS *Below:* There’s little wonder Ruth McCue Bell caught Billy Graham’s attention.



Ruth acted as a personal and theological mainstay for Billy. Where he spread a message of Christ’s mercy and joy, she held to a more sober, sin-drenched story of rescue for sinners. Where Billy was eager to please and often disregarded the long-term implications of split-second decisions, she was more circumspect about the connections and commitments that competed for his energies. In building the Montreat, North Carolina, home where Billy still lives, Ruth supplied more than a permanent address: she rooted him in one of the hearts of American Presbyterianism.

Montreat had been founded as a nondenominational Christian retreat center in hopes that it would attract organizations devoted to evangelism and good works. But it soon became a decidedly Presbyterian place. This location positioned the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) at a theological and social crossroads, one where impassioned supporters of decision-oriented evangelism and staid predestinarians could encounter one another. It made the BGEA more influential in American Protestantism.

While a missionary doctor, Ruth’s father had praised her mother, a mission nurse, for giving priority to her duties as mother of four. He disapproved of “women on the field” who put work ahead of “children and home.” The independently minded Ruth married another man with conventional ideas about male headship. Having absorbed her father’s views and her mother’s priorities, she became the effective head of household. Because she managed children and home, Billy was able to travel and preach.

Having affiliated with the Southern Baptists in 1939, Billy once told Ruth that her father, L. Nelson Bell, could not claim to be a “man of God” without being baptized by immersion, but in the face of her resistance, Billy dropped that notion. Indeed, he came to depend on Dr. Bell in many ways, both personal and professional. Bell provided the Graham children, who called him *Lao E*, a Chinese name for grandfather, with a father-figure who was consistently present when Billy was not.

LIKE FATHER, LIKE DAUGHTER

Ruth Bell Graham also depended heavily on her father. In 1945, when she was pregnant with their first child, Ruth decided to move to Montreat to live with and then across the street from the Bells. Her determination to stay in that most Presbyterian of places—rather than Minnesota, Switzerland, or Florida, all potential home bases during the 1950s and 1960s—ensured that the children grew up surrounded not only by loving grandparents, but also by Presbyterian clergy and missionary families. This meant that all five Graham children were embedded in networks of Christian connection and Presbyterian purposefulness. The children—especially Franklin, born when Nelson and Virginia Bell were still relatively young—imbibed their worldview, shaped as it was by decades of mission evangelism and service.

In Montreat Ruth’s parents, especially her father, reinforced her adamant personality. She closely resembled her father in temperament. Father and daughter were both skilled at sidestepping opponents. With what Billy Graham biographer John Pollock called

The next generation

Billy and Ruth Graham's children found their own niches for ministry



A FIFTIES FAMILY Ruth Graham poses with her children in Montreat, North Carolina, in 1958. *From left:* Franklin, Bunny, Anne, Gigi, Ruth with baby Ned.

unfaithful, she felt suicidal. By the time her third marriage was on the rocks, she founded Ruth Graham and Friends to help wounded Christians stop pretending they have it all together. In 2009, she married a fourth time to a former minister who was being tried for possession of child pornography. The next year, Ruth Graham was ordained as a Baptist minister, and her husband was among those who laid hands on her.

Virginia Leftwich “Gigi” Graham Foreman (b. 1945) married Swiss-Armenian Stephan Tchividjian at the tender age of 17. But life in Switzerland proved intolerable under her father-in-law’s domineering influence. They fled to America and had seven children. Gigi became depressed and began to write on scraps of paper between household tasks. Eventually she completed 10 books and developed an inspirational speaking and writing ministry. After she and Stephan divorced, she married and divorced a private investigator, and in 2012 wedded childhood friend Jim Wilson, son of her father’s constant companion T. W. Wilson.

Billy Graham called **Anne Graham Lotz** (b. 1948) “the best preacher in the family,” but she prefers the title “teacher” to reduce conflict with conservative-minded Christians. Anne married dentist Daniel Lotz at age 18 and had her first child at age 20. She soon felt she was drifting and sought an anchor through Bible Study Fellowship. Her success as a Bible teacher led her to found AnGeL Ministries. She has six honorary doctorates and 11 books and has taken her “Just Give Me Jesus” seminars to 12 countries and has spoken to hundreds of thousands.

Ruth “Bunny” Graham (b. 1950) said that her father gave her grace and she wants to give grace to others. After Bunny discovered her first husband had been

The teenage **William Franklin Graham III** (b. 1952) gave his parents plenty to worry about: long hair, bad grades, tobacco, alcohol, large loud motorcycles, and late hours. He resisted a call to preach, but took readily to relief work. Mentored by Samaritan’s Purse (SP) founder, Bob Pierce, Franklin became SP president in 1979. In 1989 he added BGEA events to his SP responsibilities, and by 1995 Billy Graham recommended that Franklin succeed him. Franklin’s hard-edged style is often contrasted with his father’s more gentle ways. As Franklin told *Newsweek*, “We preach the same gospel, but Daddy hates to say no, and I can say no.”

Big sister Anne says **Nelson Edman “Ned” Graham** (b. 1958) was Ruth Graham’s favorite child. Ned has continued the family focus on Chinese missions as president of East Gates International. East Gates works with existing structures to meet the needs of Chinese Christians. Ned tried to honor his mother’s wishes to be buried near their Montreat home, but Franklin won his father’s approval for her burial at the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte. Ned has been married twice, spent time in rehab for substance abuse, and says he suffered from demonic oppression. He told *Charisma* magazine that he experienced deliverance after “inner healing” prayer and that God gave him a new “prayer language.” —by the editors

ON THE ROAD Ruth rides in her father's motorcycle as a child in China. Her attempts to ride as an adult brought broken bones, red faces.

"Nelsonic shrewdness," Dr. Bell barreled through natural, political, and bureaucratic obstacles as director of Love and Mercy Hospital in Tsingianpu, building it into the largest Presbyterian Church (PCUS) hospital in China.

Bell also ran public interference for Billy among critics, especially those more conservative like Bob Jones. Bell could persuasively rebut those opponents because of his own reputation for theological conservatism. Spicier in tone than Billy and possessed of insistent theological precision—which he exercised in debates within the PCUS—Bell allowed Billy to keep his distance from denominational politics, while still maintaining clear evangelical commitments. Where Billy sought inclusion more than division, Bell seems to have reveled in debate. Bell's taste for disputation helps us appreciate even more Billy's characteristic conciliatory stance. Moreover, Bell recognized and admired his son-in-law's unique ability to smooth a sometimes rancorous group of supporters into a "homogeneous group" and bucked him up frequently in letters written during the young evangelist's budding career. Billy highly valued Bell's support.

Bell catalyzed one of the most important moves Billy Graham made in the mid-twentieth century. Vexed for years by the skeptical approach of biblical studies that, in his view, placed reason over revelation and created a Christianity built on "a program" rather than "a Person," Bell worked with Graham to get *Christianity Today* magazine off the ground in 1956.

Graham wanted an intellectually rigorous publication that could compete with the *Christian Century*. Fourteen years earlier, Bell had created the *Southern Presbyterian Journal* to defend orthodoxy in the PCUS. Thus he was able to contribute both experience and a strong desire to give a larger platform to a form of Protestantism that rejected both skeptical modernism and obscurantist fundamentalism. John Pollock even gave Bell credit for *Christianity Today's* title, borrowed from a short-lived newspaper he read in the early 1930s that took a "scholarly stand" against biblical modernism. One of Nelson Bell's most significant contributions was to cultivate Sun Oil Company's J. Howard Pew as the magazine's major benefactor. Both Ruth and her father contributed regular columns to the magazine. And Billy recalled taking Ruth's advice when it came time to appoint the magazine's second editor.



THE FRANKLIN FACTOR

Ruth Graham's choice to raise their children under her father's influence displayed its fruit most clearly in the Grahams' eldest son, Franklin, who succeeded his father as head of the BGEA in 2000. Ruth made Franklin who he is, temperamentally and theologically, in much the same way that Dr. Bell shaped her. This family inheritance demonstrates how private connections can have public effects.

Franklin's public face resembles the early Billy Graham—confrontational and vociferously anticommunist. Billy's bite in those days may have come more from his reading of the religious and social contexts of the 1940s and 1950s than from deeply rooted conviction, since he moderated his tone and his message over the years. Franklin's spikiness has endured, which could indicate a lasting inheritance from his mother and grandfather. Franklin may display his taste for controversy even more freely since 2007 because his mother has not been around to chastise and temper him as only she could.

In his 1995 autobiography *Rebel with a Cause*, Franklin wrote that he inherited his adventurous spirit from his mother. Maybe Ruth's missionary ambitions were at least as much about the adventure of being in Tibet as a single woman in the early 1940s as about sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. The woman who wanted to ride a motorcycle (as her father had done in China and as few women did in her era) and risked her life testing a zip line reared a son who did ride his own motorcycle and, in the summer of 1971, drove a Land Rover from London, England, to a mission hospital in Mafrag, Jordan.

Franklin and his mother shared a stubborn streak, a love of practical jokes, and a desire to win any argument. Franklin reflected later on the many times he and his mother clashed over points of morality,



often to comic effect. Determined to break him of a developing habit, Ruth once had a young Franklin smoke a whole pack of cigarettes in one sitting. He got sick, repeatedly, but smoked through the pack because, he wrote, "It gave me great satisfaction not to give in." Many times, his mother's punishments simply appeared to Franklin as a "new adventure." While Ruth's daring spirit was tempered by marriage and motherhood, Franklin's leadership continued to be defined by impulsiveness.

Franklin described his sister Anne as "a real theologian (like Mama)." Ruth held stubbornly to her theological commitments. There is a common thread of theological intransigence passing from Nelson Bell to Ruth to Franklin.

The combined influences of Ruth, her parents, and the Montreat ethos surely made a powerful case to Franklin for orienting his career toward missions. Although Samaritan's Purse, the organization that Franklin has led since 1979, provides disaster relief and material support to people around the world, it works in a way that Bell would have approved—sharing the gospel while addressing physical needs. Just as Bell oversaw his hospital's unprecedented success treating the parasitical infestation known as black fever



BACK IN THE USA Above: Aboard the ocean liner *Queen Elizabeth* in March 1960, Ruth Graham welcomes her husband after his two-and-a-half-month evangelistic tour of Africa and the Middle East.

A POET'S PRAYERS Left: Ruth Graham's regimen of prayer and study became fertile ground for her writing, including four volumes of poetry.

as a way to spread the Christian message, and just as Ruth opened her mountain home to wayward college students to share Christianity with them, so SP's Operation Christmas Child addresses the needs of both givers and receivers while sharing the gospel. Franklin became a pragmatic and gospel-driven person like his grandfather and his mother.

What shape will the BGEA's future work take? The organization's immediate future hinges on how the influences of Nelson Bell and Ruth Graham play out in Franklin Graham's life. At the close of his autobiography, Franklin described his work with Samaritan's Purse and his growing call to preach. At the end of the twentieth century, he anticipated combining Ruth's mission aspirations and Billy's preaching work. Indeed, Samaritan's Purse continues its worldwide outreach, and the BGEA's Festivals of Hope with Franklin Graham are carrying the tradition of international mass meetings into the twenty-first century.

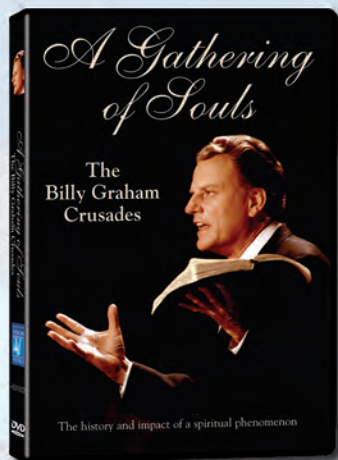
Nelson Bell and his daughter gave untold support to Billy Graham during his long public ministry. In the end, Graham's legacy may depend on what they gave to Franklin. ☐

Anne Blue Wills teaches the history and culture of US religions at Davidson College. She is currently writing a biography of Ruth Bell Graham.

THE BILLY GRAHAM DVD COLLECTION

A Gathering of Souls

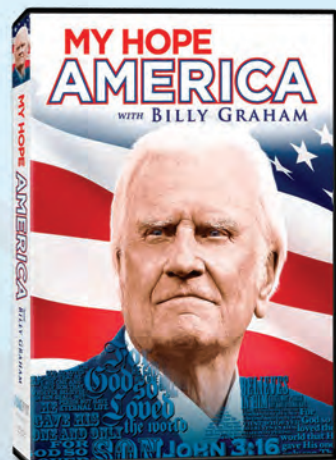
The Billy Graham Crusades were an outworking of a sophisticated organizational structure, each representing years of planning and months of follow up. The crusades shaped the face of evangelical Christianity in the twentieth century and altered the courses of countless individual lives. With expert commentary from pastors, academics, Graham associates, and fellow evangelists such as Luis Palau, this documentary gives the history of the crusades from the first event in Los Angeles in 1949 to the remarkable gatherings behind the Iron Curtain and in the Far East. 51 minutes.



DVD—#501582D, \$14.99 **SALE!** \$9.99

My Hope America

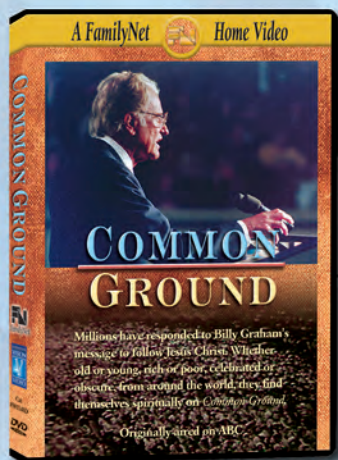
Billy Graham has been asking God for an opportunity to bring lasting hope to the entire nation. Through *My Hope*, this message has been shaking nations, drawing millions to the truth—a saving faith in Jesus Christ. Don't miss this unprecedented opportunity to join Billy Graham in sharing the message of God's love with your family, friends, and neighbors. This three-DVD set includes over seven hours of material, featuring Billy Graham's newly released "The Cross" message and two other *My Hope* programs: "Defining Moments" and "Lose to Gain." Also included are training resources and evangelism tools to assist you in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and three legacy messages from Billy Graham's Crusades Classics. 420 minutes.



DVD—#330034D, \$19.99 **SALE!** \$9.99

Common Ground

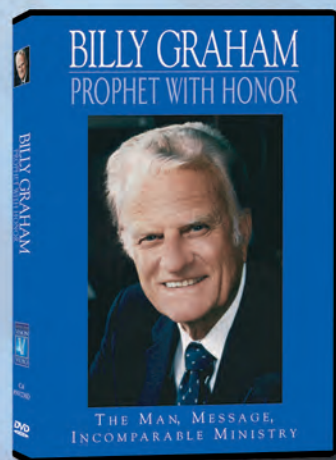
Hear firsthand the stories of people touched by Graham's ministry, and witness the dramatic transformations that have taken place in their lives. Individuals featured in the program include Graham's wife, Ruth, and their five children; former presidents George H. W. Bush and Gerald Ford; television personality Kathie Lee Gifford; actress Jeannette Clift George; Jerome Hines, leading bass of the Metropolitan Opera for 41 years; and Phillip Goudeaux, former member of the Black Panther party and now pastor of a growing San Diego church. Narrated by stage and screen actress Julie Harris. 60 minutes.



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Billy Graham: Prophet with Honor

In this fast-paced international television special hosted by David Frost, we meet Billy Graham and hear in his own words about his unprecedented opportunities and the formidable challenges that marked major turning points for him. Documentary footage, Graham's own explanations, and comments from friends, associates, and critics provide insight into one of the most unusual and influential lives of our era. 50 minutes.



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The evangelist and the intellectuals

Billy Graham nurtured intellectual institutions and took the gospel to universities

ANDREW FINSTUEN

BILLY GRAHAM THE WORLD-FAMOUS evangelist was also Billy Graham the lifelong learner. Dissatisfied after one semester by what he saw as the cultural and religious rigidity of Bob Jones College, he transferred to Florida Bible Institute. He could have launched his preaching career from there, but Graham wanted more, and he decided on Wheaton College, a premier evangelical institution. After Wheaton Graham entertained the idea of further study. At the urging of his friend Charlie Templeton, he considered a Princeton seminary education. Graham even proposed they forgo Princeton and continue their studies at Oxford University.

Graham did not go to either Princeton or Oxford, but the questions raised by the prospect of critical study of Christianity and the Bible followed him anyway. The most widely known moment when Graham wrestled with faith and reason was his storied mountaintop

CAMPUS COOL Graham's desire for intellectual respectability drove him to visit leading universities. Here he chats with two Oxford University students in 1966.

experience just prior to the Los Angeles crusade of 1949. In California's San Bernardino Mountains, Graham went through a crisis of doubt provoked by Templeton's urgent questions. Graham emerged from a prayerful walk in the pine forest with faithful certitude in the truth of the Bible and the way of Jesus Christ. Newly convicted he launched a career free from agonizing intellectual questions about the truth of the Christian faith. At points in his career, this led Graham to occasional damning statements about intellect that brought on charges of anti-intellectualism. Yet, for the balance of his six-decade ministry, Graham focused substantial

SEMINARY BOOSTER *Top right:* In 1956 Graham joined the Fuller Seminary board of trustees. He is pictured here between evangelist Charles E. Fuller (left) and seminary president E. J. Carnell.

FAQs *Bottom right:* Graham's team widely distributed reprints of this 1956 *Look* magazine article.

energy on the importance of education and ideas, which opened up avenues of inquiry for him and countless other Americans.

EDUCATING EVANGELICALS

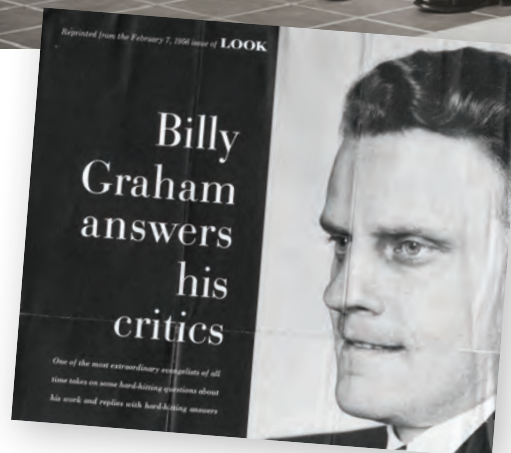
Graham's interest in the life of the mind placed him in the company of the New Evangelicals, a group led by the likes of Harold Ockenga and Carl Henry who sought an intellectually rigorous middle way between archfundamentalism and archliberalism. Out of that vision, and with the funding and influence of Charles Fuller, Fuller Theological Seminary was born in 1947. Graham was an early and ardent supporter.

His interest in Fuller grew more pointed during his time as president of the Northwestern Schools in Minnesota (1948–1952). After all, he had charge of young students, some of whom would want to attend seminary. In 1956 Graham joined Fuller's board of trustees. That experience prepared him, with Ockenga's help, to found Gordon-Conwell Seminary in 1969 and serve as the chair of its board. The seminary's swift growth in student body and prestige made it an East Coast complement to Fuller.

Graham also considered establishing Crusade University in the late 1950s and Billy Graham University in the late 1960s. In both cases, plans were drawn up, curricula developed, and funds solicited. But Graham backed out of these ventures, for fear that they would divert his energies from evangelism.

Though Graham never founded a university, his publishing activities indicate his clear interest in shaping evangelicalism's style and content. From the first of his 32 books, *Peace with God* (1953) to the last, *The Reason for My Hope: Salvation* (2013), Graham was consistent with the moderate conservatism of the New Evangelicals. He encouraged a born-again, thoughtful, and socially responsible faith, neither dogmatic nor indefinite. This attitude suffused his syndicated column, which reached millions of Americans and taught the nature of "new evangelical" Christianity.

Graham's cofounding of *Christianity Today* in 1956 further illustrates how he tried to form Americans' theological imaginations. In the early 1950s, when the press still called Graham a "Gabriel in Gabardine," he considered launching a conservative periodical that would answer the liberal *Christian Century*. In 1953 inspiration struck in the middle of the night. Graham got out of bed



and sketched the plan for a magazine that he thought would "give theological respectability to evangelicals."

Backed by the influence of Harold Ockenga and Graham's father-in-law, L. Nelson Bell, *Christianity Today* exceeded the *Christian Century*'s circulation within weeks. The magazine published authors who shared a predominantly charitable, yet rigorous, Christian voice—attuned to the strengths and weaknesses of both fundamentalists and liberals.

CAMPUS OUTREACH

Graham's desire for "intellectual respectability" and his interest in a middle course through the theological landscape also drove his many visits to colleges and universities of all types—church related and secular, liberal and conservative. Most conspicuous were repeated



THE B.I.B.L.E. After a 1949 crisis of faith, Graham committed himself to the trustworthiness of Scripture. His signature line soon became "The Bible says."

trips to such bastions of secular scholarship as Harvard, Yale, Oxford, Cambridge, and the University of California, Berkeley. Graham went to such places ostensibly to give lectures, but in reality he gave sermons, omitting only the altar call at their conclusion. Inevitably, he won respect—sometimes begrudging—from students. He did so by indefatigable charm and sincerity, but also by giving an unflinching and genuine articulation of the Christian gospel. He turned the halls of learning into unlikely settings for a lesson in evangelical preaching.

There were always some present who resisted the lesson and challenged him with condescending questions and comments. In Cambridge, England, in 1955, the *Manchester Guardian* reported Graham faced a "barrage of questions" from "academic doubters." Graham's "directness and shrewd tactics" held the doubters at bay. The *Guardian* noted that despite Graham's smile, he commented wryly, "Any fool can ask a question that ten men can't answer." The *Guardian* concluded, "The point went home."

A few years later at Harvard, one of the chaplains introduced Graham but could not resist a critical word: "I cannot agree with all that Dr. Graham says. His biblicalism troubles me a bit. When he says 'the Bible says,' I wish he would get on to talk about Christ and leave out the rooting of his authority in the Bible." In his opening remarks, Graham replied, tongue-in-cheek: "I want to turn to the Bible, if I might, to find a quotation of Jesus because I don't know of any quotations of Jesus outside of the Bible." The audience burst out in laughter and warmed to Graham immediately.


Graham's growing print empire and his unquestionable influence commanded the attention, even the respect, of intellectuals. He certainly caught the attention of prominent theologian and political philosopher, Reinhold Niebuhr, who both praised and criticized

Graham in a series of articles between 1956 and 1958. Their print relationship never became a personal one, though Graham and Niebuhr were both invited to participate in a forum on "Evangelism in Our Time" at Princeton University in December 1956. Graham attended, but Niebuhr did not. Others who joined the forum included John Stott, rector of All Souls Church, London; John Mackay, president of Princeton Theological Seminary; Paul Lehmann, then a professor at Harvard Divinity School; Theodore Gill, managing editor of the *Christian Century*; James Jones, Union Seminary in Richmond, Virginia; and Sidney Lovett, chaplain at Yale University.

SPARRING WITH HEAVYWEIGHTS

Graham's connections to accomplished academics stretched beyond this group to other theological heavyweights from America and Europe, including Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Helmut Thielicke.

These thinkers hardly embraced Graham uncritically. Barth, for example, lectured at the University of Chicago during Graham's 1962 Chicago Crusade. He endorsed that effort but also told reporters that "mass evangelism is not for me," explaining that he and Graham had breakfasted together and that he told Graham: "You point a pistol at a man's breast. I prefer a more inviting approach." Still, Barth and many theological colleagues agreed that Graham authentically represented the gospel message of sin and salvation.

All of these activities point to Graham's understanding that education and ideas matter. They matter because he believed certain books, universities, and even theologians posed threats to his and his audience's understanding of Christianity, and so he countered with books of his own, the support of seminaries and universities, and his own reading of and relationships with theologians. But Graham was by no means merely on the defensive. Rather, he pursued all of this intellectual work to persuade Americans and the world that while ideas and education would forever be important, they are secondary to a faith in Jesus as the Christ—the answer to all questions, even those of doubters. 

Andrew Finstuen is dean of the honors college at Boise State University. He is the author of Original Sin and Everyday Protestants: The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr, Billy Graham, and Paul Tillich in an Age of Anxiety.



“Jesus was not a white man”

Billy Graham asked Howard Jones to become a living experiment in racial progress

EDWARD GILBREATH

THERE WERE MANY SIDES to Howard Jones—musician, pastor, family man, missionary—but as an editor at *Christianity Today* some years ago, I wanted to interview him about his unique role in evangelical history: in 1957 he became the first African American leader to join Billy Graham’s organization.

Howard Jones’s stoic demeanor when we met reflected the steely focus that carried him through the challenges of being a pioneer of racial progress in America. “It’s an awareness that you’re a living test, a human experiment,” he told me. “Your every word and action has the potential to make or break the hopes of your race.”

When Jones joined Graham’s crusade team, racial reconciliation was decades away from becoming a Christian buzzword, and Martin Luther King Jr. had not yet reached the full height of his fame. Yet, because Jones accepted the challenge of being a “human experiment,” he was a primary case study in Graham’s evolving courage in racial relations.

WINDY CITY PREACHER In June 1962, nine days after flying to Chicago with Martin Luther King Jr., Graham told members of 18 rival gangs, “Jesus was a tough guy.”

Playing clarinet and alto saxophone, Jones started off wanting to lead a big band and hoping “to become the next big name in jazz music.” In the late 1930s, big band leaders like Duke Ellington and Count Basie made women swoon, men jealous, and young musicians like Jones eager for a shot at fame.

From all appearances, Jones was a star in the making, but his future wife, Wanda, flipped the script on his planned career. “As a jazz musician, I tended to attract a lot of attention,” he said, “but Wanda attracted mine.” As classmates at Oberlin High School in Ohio, Wanda Young and Howard Jones dated seriously for a couple of years. Then she delivered an ultimatum: put God first or find another girlfriend. “She told me, ‘I love you, but I love Christ more,’” he remembered. “‘You keep playing, and I’ll keep praying.’”



After several miserable weeks, he came to see things Wanda's way.

In 1941 the couple enrolled at Nyack Missionary Training Institute (now Nyack College) in metropolitan New York. After graduation they married, and Howard began pastoring Bethany Chapel in Harlem. Drawn to the lost souls outside the church walls, he formed an evangelistic outreach to New York's inner-city neighborhoods. Along the way, he met Jack Wyrzten, a bandleader-turned-minister, whose *Word of Life* youth radio broadcast and evangelistic rallies packed venues like Carnegie Hall.

After eight years in the Bronx, Jones returned to Ohio and became the pastor of Smoot Memorial Alliance Church in Cleveland. There an advertisement in *Christian Life* turned his attention to Africa. A radio station in Liberia wanted recordings of Negro spirituals produced by African American churches. Their Liberian listeners loved the spirituals. Jones's church choir recorded some tunes, and the station responded enthusiastically. Jones began sending tapes regularly. They were soon inundated with mail from listeners across Africa who had been converted through the program. "They said it was the first time they had ever heard the voice of an American black man," Jones recalled.

Soon the radio ministry invited Jones to preach in Africa. So he embarked on a three-month tour, becoming the first African American clergyman to

were groundbreaking, but his most significant contribution to dismantling the church's cultural prejudices came by way of a letter from Billy Graham.

In the 1950s Graham realized that his integrity as an evangelist would be measured by his response to America's struggle over race relations. Nearly a full century after the Civil War, Christians in the former Confederate states still balked at integration.

Nineteenth-century evangelist Dwight Moody had confronted the race issue head-on when in 1876 he attracted both black and white audiences to meetings in Augusta, Georgia, but whites began complaining that blacks were filling the best seats. So the rally's sponsors divided the seating by race. Moody opposed the decision but bowed to white pressure.

In 1917 America's next superstar preacher—Billy Sunday—held special meetings for African Americans and visited black churches during a campaign in Atlanta. He had been sensitive to the plight of minorities since the start of his ministry as a Bible teacher for the Chicago YMCA. However, he drew the line when it came to holding integrated meetings. He knew that no national white Christian leader who wanted to remain in good standing could upset such social mores.

Billy Graham faced a similar dilemma. During his early years of ministry, he never questioned the custom of segregated seating at his southern crusades. But by 1952 the young celebrity preacher was wrestling with

"APARTHEID DOOMED" Graham refused to hold segregated meetings in South Africa when first invited in 1951. But by 1973 he preached to integrated crowds there, calling the "terrible injustice" of apartheid a "sin." Durban's *Sunday Tribune* gave the evangelist banner headlines.

hold major rallies in Africa. "The people went wild," Jones said. "They beat drums, chanted, and said, 'Praise the Lord! We've seen the white missionary, but we've never seen a black preacher from America.'"

Jones believed their enthusiasm disproved the narrow-minded notions American Christians harbored about African missions. "White evangelicals [believed] that Africans would not respond to black American missionaries. We helped change that perception."

SEGREGATION FROM MOODY TO GRAHAM

Jones's efforts in African missions



the hypocrisy of racial prejudice in the church. "There is no scriptural basis for segregation," he told an audience in Jackson, Mississippi. "It may be there are places where such is desirable to both races, but certainly not in the church."

Blacks and a few whites greeted Graham's words enthusiastically, but most whites were critical. Under pressure, Graham softened his views. "We follow the existing social customs in whatever part of the country in which we minister," he said. "I came to Jackson to preach only the Bible and not to enter into local issues."

Nevertheless, Graham soon realized he could not detach this social issue from his spiritual message. In 1953 Graham stunned the sponsors of his Chattanooga, Tennessee, crusade when he spoke out against segregated seating. There he famously removed the ropes separating black and white seating before one of the meetings. A year later, the Supreme Court banned segregation in public schools. Emboldened by the court's decision, Billy Graham vowed never again to hold segregated crusades. From then on he began incremental but clear steps toward dismantling segregation in the American church.

But the last thing Jones expected when he returned from Africa in 1957 was a letter from Billy Graham. Graham was then in the early weeks of his 68-day crusade at New York's Madison Square Garden. He asked Jack Wyrzten how to reverse the low minority turnout at the event. Graham realized it was important for his rallies to reflect the diversity of his host city, and he was eager to demonstrate his commitment to racial integration. The evangelist had already integrated his team with Akbar Abdul-Haqq, a gifted preacher from India, but he wanted to add an African American. Wyrzten recommended Howard Jones.

A MAN OF MANY FIRSTS Billy Graham's first African American associate, Howard Jones, joins the evangelist on the platform in Seoul, South Korea, in 1973. When Jones preached for Graham in Africa, he was the first black preacher from America that audiences there had ever seen.

When Jones met the evangelist, Graham greeted him with a warm hug. Graham explained his situation and then invited Jones to join his team. Jones was wary about taking advantage of his church. "I had already been away from my church for three months, so I was afraid that if I asked for any more time off they'd kick me out," he said.

But when Graham wrote to Jones's church, the congregation was thrilled to have their pastor "borrowed" by the world's most famous preacher.

BILLY GRAHAM'S JACKIE ROBINSON

What came next was tougher. Graham asked Jones to sit on the platform with him in front of 18,000 people. A dozen other pastors and civic leaders sat with them, but Jones was the only African American on stage.

A decade earlier, as the first black player in Major League Baseball, Jackie Robinson had received angry stares and death threats. As "the Jackie Robinson" of Billy Graham's ministry, Jones didn't receive death threats, he said, "but I was the recipient of plenty of dirty looks."

News of Jones's inclusion on the team brought Graham an alarming number of angry letters. "You should not have a Negro on your team," they warned. "You're going to ruin your ministry by adding minorities," they wrote. "We may have no choice but to end our support."

"What Billy did was radical," said Jones. "He weathered the barrage of angry letters and criticisms. He resisted the idea of . . . playing it safe. There was never any hesitation on Billy's part. . . . He knew it was what God was calling him to do."

But when Graham asked Jones how to increase minority turnout at the crusade, Jones gave him the hard truth. "If they're not coming to you, you have to go where they are," Jones said. "Billy, you need to go to Harlem."

Many of Graham's white colleagues said it was too dangerous—"Those savages up there will kill you!"—but Graham knew Jones was right.

"The funny thing is, some of those whites who were saying 'Don't go to Harlem' were members of evangelical churches that were sending white missionaries to Africa," Jones said.

Jones organized a rally of more than 8,000 people in Harlem, followed the next week by an event in Brooklyn, where more than 10,000 blacks and other minorities came out to hear Graham. The events boosted black attendance at the crusade. By the end of



A GLOBETROTTER GOES TO HARLEM

In October 1960, immediately after returning from rallies in Germany and Switzerland where he spoke to over 800,000 people, Billy Graham made a beeline for New York City's multiethnic East Harlem. There he met with leaders of street gangs and held a three-day crusade aimed at the neighborhood's Hispanic population. Just two months later, Ben E. King enshrined the neighborhood in popular culture with his song, "Spanish Harlem."

In South Africa in 1973, during the height of apartheid, Graham preached: "Jesus was a man; he was human. He was not a white man. He was not a black man. He came from that part of the world that touches Africa, and Asia, and Europe, and he probably had a brown skin." And then this: "Christ belongs to *all* people. He belongs to the whole world."

the campaign, blacks made up 20 percent of the 18,000 people who attended each night.

Jones was often the only black person in the room during the long days prior to the evening meetings. And the isolation in the evenings seemed worse. "I remember sitting on the crusade platform on various occasions with empty seats next to me because some white crusade participants had decided to sit on the other side of the stage," he recalled.

At other times Jones went down to counsel new believers during the altar calls only to see white counselors move away.

INTEGRATING SOCIAL MINISTRY AND EVANGELISM

A year later Jones joined the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) as a full-time associate, serving for more than 35 years, until he retired in 1994. He participated in countless evangelistic campaigns to Africa and elsewhere, helped recruit Canadian evangelist Ralph Bell as Graham's second African American associate, and was instrumental in various humanitarian initiatives on behalf of the BGEA, raising \$80,000 for famine-stricken West Africa in 1975.

"Howard played a strong role in showing Billy the importance of meeting physical needs as well as the spiritual," Ralph Bell told me in an interview.

During Graham's 1966 London Crusade, a hotel refused Jones a room because of his skin. Graham told his entire team to vacate the premises and find a hotel that welcomed all races.

Jones saw Graham's boldness up close, and it troubled him greatly when critics, both black and white, questioned the evangelist's commitment to racial reconciliation and social justice. "I lost a lot of my black friends who thought I should leave Billy," Jones said. "But the people who accuse Billy of not being vocal enough against racism and other social issues have not seen what goes on behind the scenes. They do not know that man's heart."

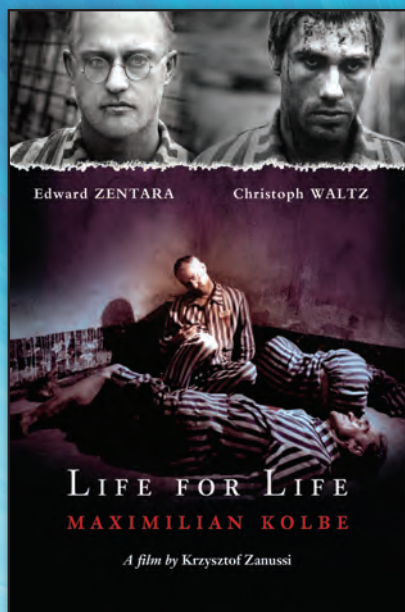
In November 2010 Howard Jones died at the age of 89. His life was marked by many "firsts" that helped shape racial progress in the modern evangelical movement: first African American evangelist in Africa, first president of the National Black Evangelical Association, first African American inducted into the National Religious Broadcasters Hall of Fame, and first black associate with the BGEA.

Among all those accomplishments, partnering with Graham during the turbulent days of racial unrest in America brought him particular satisfaction.

"In New York, Billy once and for all made it clear that his ministry would not be a slave to the culture's segregationist ways," Jones said. "The gospel has always transcended whatever racial or cultural boundaries we've constructed to limit it." ■

Edward Gilbreath coauthored Howard Jones's 2003 memoir, Gospel Trailblazer. He is executive director of communications for the Evangelical Covenant Church. His most recent book is The Birmingham Revolution: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Epic Challenge to the Church.

INSPIRATIONAL New Films



✦ LIFE FOR LIFE — Maximilian Kolbe

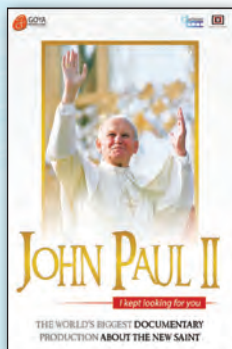
Produced in Poland by acclaimed film director Krzysztof Zanussi, this is a powerful drama about the life and death of Polish martyr, St. Maximilian Kolbe, who gave his life for a fellow prisoner in Auschwitz. The Nazi practice of putting 10 prisoners to death by starvation was the punishment when one escaped. The story of Kolbe is seen through the eyes of the escaped prisoner who was haunted by this priest who made such a heroic offering of his life for the life of a stranger. He learns that Kolbe was the founder of the largest Franciscan monastery ever, a publisher, writer, theologian, missionary and Marian mystic. Pope John Paul II proclaimed Kolbe as the “patron saint of the difficult 20th century.” Stars **Christoph Waltz** and **Edward Zentara**.

In Polish w/ English & Spanish subtitles. Includes 16 page Collector's Booklet & study guide.

“MORE THAN ANY FILM, IT EXPLORES HOW THE SAINTS SHOULD INSPIRE US. AMONG THE MOST ESSENTIAL SAINT FILMS I’VE SEEN.”

— Steven Greydanus, Film Critic, *National Catholic Register*

DVD LFL-M . . . 90 min., \$19.95



✦ POPE JOHN PAUL II: I Kept Looking for You

This is world's biggest documentary on the new saint. It reveals his remarkable legacy in the history of the world and how his extraordinary personality, faith and courage united people on all continents, regardless of social status, age or religion. Using exclusive archival footage on John Paul II, with original new footage, this comprehensive epic film was four years in the making and filmed in 13 countries. It features many world-famous figures from the Church, politics, entertainment and news industries, and their inspiring insights about the impact of St. John Paul II. **DVD** PJPKL-M . . . 90 min., \$19.95



✦ THE REVOLUTION OF JOHN XXIII: The Second Vatican Council

When he surprised everyone by calling for the historic Second Vatican Council in 1962, John XXIII launched a spiritual revolution in the Church and the world. He summoned the world's bishops to discuss the direction and future of the Church and the relationship of the Church to the modern world. This documentary presents original film footage of the Council in action and insights from witnesses who took part in the Council, including **Cardinals Francis Arinze, Julian Herranz, Paul Poupard** and more. An illuminating film about the historic Council. **DVD** RJ23-M . . . 55 min., \$19.95



✦ FRANCIS: The Pope of Renewal

Earthquake, revolution, Openness . . . how do we define the “Francis effect”? This film shows the striking ascension to the top of world's popularity of the little-known Argentinian cardinal. It reflects on the renewal of the Catholic Church's image that Pope Francis has generated. With amazing images of his memorable first year, this film offers inspiring stories, encounters, humorous details and provoking messages from an already historic papacy. Includes commentary by **John Allen, Cardinal Dolan** and others. **DVD** FPOC-M . . . 55 min., \$19.95



✦ FINDING ST. ANTHONY: A Story of Loss and Light

This film reveals the spiritual journey of St. Anthony of Padua in the 13th century, a young man who was often lost and searching for direction in life. As we encounter his humanity, we find a saint we can relate to, who struggled in life, someone we could easily call our friend. Shot on historic locations in Portugal and Italy, this film focuses on the experiences of Anthony in his search for the life God was calling him to. What we discover may surprise us: a reflection of our own search. The story of this great saint gives us inspiration for our own spiritual journeys. **DVD** FSA-M . . . 50 min., \$19.95



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An evangelistic band of brothers

Five friends who helped Billy Graham set—and stay—his course

SETH DOWLAND

OVER THE YEARS dozens of friends supported Billy Graham, protected him, helped him think strategically, and carried responsibilities so that he could focus on public ministry. *Decision* magazine editor Sherwood Eliot Wirt compiled a list of 30 of Graham's "royal musketeers." Here are five key friends from among them who joined Graham in his earliest days and stayed with him.

CLIFF BARROWS

Five years younger than Graham, Cliff Barrows first sang at a Billy Graham campaign in 1945 in Asheville, North Carolina. Barrows and his wife, Billie, interrupted their honeymoon to fill in when Graham's regular song leader left abruptly, and a six-decade

MELODY MAKERS Cliff Barrows (*left*) led more than singing—including Graham's radio and film efforts. Bass "Bev" Shea was Billy Graham's first, and oldest, recruit.

alliance was born. Barrows joined Graham full time in the late 1940s. In 1950 Barrows became part of the founding board of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) and took the reins of the *Hour of Decision* radio program. As years passed Barrows acquired other roles, including president of World Wide Pictures. Most observers considered Barrows the number-two man in the BGEA. Behind the scenes he defused budding controversies and kept the organization humming.

RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS Brothers T. W. and Grady Wilson, Graham's high school friends, converted with him at the same 1934 revival. T. W. (*left*) traveled with Graham, spending more time at his side than anyone, including Ruth. Grady was the first associate evangelist Graham recruited and in 1950 became vice president of the newly formed Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

As the song leader at Billy Graham crusades, the genial and charismatic Barrows welcomed the crowds that flocked to hear Graham preach. Educated in music and Shakespearean drama at Bob Jones College, Barrows deftly kept services moving and ably led thousands in congregational singing. As the last opening act for each Graham service finished, Barrows would excitedly give the floor to "a man with a message for these crisis days." Billy Graham.

Barrows's showmanship was integral to the success of Graham's crusades, for both attendees and the millions who watched on television. When intense heat prematurely ended Graham's 1962 Soldier Field service in Chicago, Barrows devised a plan to fill the seven minutes still needed for an hour-long television broadcast. He took Graham back to the stadium hours after the last visitor had left. Alone in the stadium, Graham filmed a plea for viewers not to miss their chance to give their lives to Jesus. The panorama of a deserted and desolate Soldier Field provided a dramatic backdrop for Graham's message. Viewers made the largest-ever response to a Graham television program.

In the last third of his career, Barrows was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, the Religious Broadcasting Hall of Fame, and the Southern Baptist Evangelists' Hall of Faith. He increasingly accommodated new singers onto crusade platforms in the 1970s and 1980s, as contemporary Christian music became part of the services. But Barrows kept a firm hand on crusade programs, and his unerring leadership of classic hymns gave services predictable appeal for decades.

GRADY WILSON

In 1934 Billy Graham and his friend Grady Wilson attended a revival meeting together in Charlotte, North Carolina. The two 15-year-olds joined the choir—which sat behind the pulpit—to escape the withering gaze and damnation preaching of visiting revivalist Mordecai Ham. Their plan didn't work. During the invitation hymn, Graham and Wilson felt convicted of their sin, went forward, and registered a decision for Christ. They invited countless others to follow in their steps over the next 50 years.

Wilson was the first of the two to announce his intention to go into full-time ministry. He began preaching around age 18 and was ordained a Baptist minister at 19. Graham soon decided to enter the ministry as well.



They enrolled together at Bob Jones College, but the school's strictness drove Graham away after just one semester. The two reunited briefly at Wheaton College in 1943 and then permanently in 1947, when Wilson joined Graham's team as an associate evangelist.

Wilson accompanied Graham on some of his earliest ventures into the national limelight, including a 1950 White House visit with President Harry Truman and a 1952 Christmas campaign with soldiers in Korea. Wilson won acclaim as a preacher in his own right, attracting the attention of prominent Christian businessmen like R. G. LeTourneau and H. L. Hunt. During a 1963 visit to the White House, Wilson's storytelling tickled Lyndon Johnson enough that the president asked an aide to take notes.

Two major heart attacks sidelined Wilson in the late 1970s. He could no longer keep up a regular schedule of preaching, but he remained a beloved member of Graham's inner circle. Just before Wilson passed away in 1987, a nurse asked him if he was afraid of death. Wilson's response reflected the certainty of salvation he had carried since that 1934 Mordecai Ham revival. "Honey, why should I be afraid? I'm going to see Jesus."

T. W. WILSON

Like his younger brother Grady, Thomas Walter (T. W.) Wilson attended the 1934 Mordecai Ham revival and soon after heard a call to ministry. He pastored several churches in Georgia and Alabama in the 1940s before reluctantly accepting Graham's invitation to serve as vice president of Northwestern Schools in Minneapolis in 1948. Like Graham, Wilson made a poor college administrator, and he left the school in 1951 to launch an independent evangelistic ministry.

Wilson's ministry and bank account were thriving in 1956 when Graham called and asked him to take a massive pay cut to join the BGEA team as an

The “Modesto Manifesto”



IN 1948, 31-YEAR-OLD Billy Graham was coming off a successful stint as a Youth for Christ evangelist and entering a period of independent ministry that would last almost six decades. His revival team included Bev Shea, Grady Wilson, and Cliff Barrows. The quartet was young and charismatic. As Christianity entered its heady postwar boom, Americans flocked to revivals. Some sought salvation, but others had different aims. Politicians saw the revivals as a hedge against communism; entertainers saw a chance to promote themselves. Temptations loomed. To guard against allegations or the actual abuse of money, sex, and power that had felled previous evangelists, the Graham team decided to take concrete steps to avoid the slightest whiff of controversy.

The team gathered in a hotel room in Modesto, California. They drew up a compact that became known as the “Modesto Manifesto,” though they produced no written document. The manifesto included provisions for distributing money raised by offerings, avoiding criticism of local churches, working only with churches that supported cooperative evangelism, and using official estimates of crowd sizes to avoid exaggeration. These policies would help Graham and his team avoid charges of financial exploitation and hucksterism.

But nothing loomed larger than sex. The most famous provision of the manifesto called for each man on the Graham team never to be alone with a woman other than his wife. Graham, from that day forward, pledged not to eat, travel, or meet with a woman other than Ruth unless other people were present. This pledge guaranteed Graham’s sexual probity and enabled him to dodge accusations that have waylaid evangelists before and since.

ARCHITECTS OF ETHICS The year before Graham gained national prominence, he huddled with Bev Shea, Cliff Barrows, and Grady Wilson (*not pictured*) to set up safeguards against the temptations of money, sex, and power.

The pledge also enabled Graham to capitalize on his good looks without worrying about an oversexualized image that might scandalize his fellow evangelicals. In coverage of the famous 1949 Los Angeles crusade, reporters mentioned Graham’s “curly hair,” “broad shoulders,” and “blue eyes.” Several articles reported that Graham “has repeatedly turned down offers to go into the movies.” Nearly every piece commented on Graham’s good looks.

Graham managed to benefit from all this adulation while remaining safely off-limits to sexual advances. Both the Modesto Manifesto and his marriage to Ruth made this possible. The manifesto ensured that Graham would avoid tempting situations, while Ruth seemed content with a marriage full of long absences. She frequently said she “would rather have a little of Bill than a lot of any other man.” The line spoke both to Ruth’s contentment and to Billy’s desirability. Standing in front of thousands, Graham’s rapid-fire delivery and piercing stares won both converts and admirers. The letters that flooded BGEA offices testified to his wholesome appeal. Graham’s 57 appearances on Gallup’s annual “Ten Most Admired People” poll derived in no small part from his reputation for sexual fidelity—a reputation guaranteed by the most famous provision of the Modesto Manifesto.

—Seth Dowland

associate evangelist. Wilson resisted. But Graham prevailed with persistence and light spiritual scolding. Wilson preached for six years in that role before agreeing—again reluctantly—to serve as Graham's personal aide in 1962. "Over the next 30 years," wrote Graham biographer William Martin, "no one, including Ruth, would spend more time at Billy's side than T. W. Wilson."

Wilson accepted his private role with grace. BGEA team members praised his ability to fend off potentially overwhelming intrusions on Graham's time without ruffling feathers. He ably juggled a number of thankless tasks, such as monitoring radio stations airing the *Hour of Decision* and handling security threats during crusades. Like his brother Grady, T. W. provided Graham with the security of a friend who knew the evangelist long before his worldwide fame. When T. W. Wilson died of a heart attack in 2001, Graham said, "We prayed, laughed, and wept on hundreds of occasions. I feel his loss very deeply."

GEORGE BEVERLY SHEA

Bev Shea was the oldest of Graham's inner circle and the first to establish his own fame. An Ontario native, Shea moved south to Chicago in the 1930s to work for WMBL, the radio station owned by Moody Bible Institute. Graham first heard Shea sing on the radio after enrolling at Wheaton College in 1940. After Graham became pastor at Western Springs Baptist Church, he took over the radio program *Songs in the Night*. Graham persuaded Shea to join the *Songs in the Night* broadcast team. From that point forward, Shea's rich bass almost always served as the prelude for Graham's staccato preaching.

Because of his radio fame, Bev Shea's name headlined the handbills for some early Graham campaigns. ("Bev Shea will sing. Billy Graham will preach.") He sang hymns unadorned, and listeners reveled as his voice blended reverence with warmth. At the 1957 crusade in New York City, Shea became forever linked with the hymn "How Great Thou Art," which he sang on 108 consecutive evenings—by popular demand. His own composition, "I'd Rather Have Jesus," was another perennial favorite.

Shea recorded more than 70 albums, won a Grammy in 1966, and in 2011 received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Recording Academy, the organization that sponsors the Grammys. He sang live to over 200 million people, the vast majority at Billy Graham crusades. For most of their adult lives, Shea and Graham lived just one mile apart in Montreat, North Carolina. Shea died at the age of 104 in April 2013.

GEORGE WILSON


George Wilson—no relation to brothers Grady and T. W.—ran the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association from its inception in 1950 until his semiretirement in 1987. Wilson developed a reputation for hard-nosed



HARD-NOSED EFFICIENCY In 1950 George Wilson encouraged Billy Graham to incorporate his ministry, then drew up the legal papers. Wilson died in 1999 at age 85.

efficiency and a brusque manner. One associate said Wilson had "a unique gift for giving directions." Among the genial and conciliatory personalities that dominated BGEA's inner circle, George Wilson's firm demeanor stood out.

A Minneapolis-based layman, Wilson met Graham at a 1945 Youth for Christ rally in Chicago. Two years later, Graham assumed the presidency of Northwestern Schools, where Wilson served as business manager. He filled the same role when the BGEA formed in 1950. More than any other person, Wilson was responsible for the organization's legendary efficiency and modest trappings. He told biographer William Martin about acquiring the BGEA headquarters for \$2.25 per square foot—"easy to believe" about the dreary building, wrote Martin—and he boasted about efficiencies that saved as little as half a penny for each letter the BGEA received. For an organization that received millions of letters each year, those savings added up.

Just as Graham's sermons employed sales tactics he learned while hawking Fuller brushes in the 1930s, Wilson understood evangelism in a businessman's idiom. "Our job," said Wilson, "is to dispense the world's greatest product with the greatest economy to the greatest number of people as fast as possible." 

Seth Dowland teaches American religious history at Pacific Lutheran University and is the author of Family Values: Gender, Authority, and the Rise of the Christian Right.

Recommended resources

Books, magazines, online resources, and media recommended by CHI staff and this issue's authors

OUR TOP BOOKS ON BILLY GRAHAM

- Grant Wacker, *America's Pastor: Billy Graham and the Shaping of a Nation* (2014). Captures Graham's aptitude for capitalizing on the trends that shaped

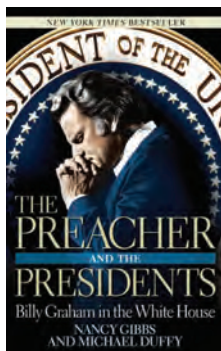


America in the twentieth century, thus making America's story his own.

- William A. Martin, *Prophet with Honor* (1991). Presents over 700 readable pages of well-documented narrative. Covers the 72 years from Billy Graham's birth to his 1990 Hong Kong Crusade.

- Billy Graham, *Just As I Am* (1997). This memoir of ministry to the famous, the infamous, and the ordinary concludes with Bill Clinton's second inauguration. Graham's constant theme is wonder and gratitude for God's leading.

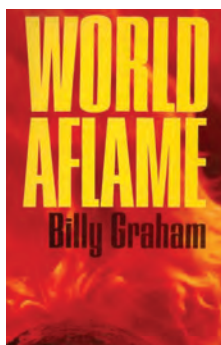
- David Aikman, *Billy Graham: His Life and Influence* (2007). *Time* magazine's former bureau chief in



Eastern Europe, Beijing, and Jerusalem traces the way Graham used powerful connections to minister in high places and evangelize in difficult ones.

- Ken Garfield, *Billy Graham: A Life in Pictures* (2013). Draws on Garfield's insider knowledge as former religion editor at Graham's hometown newspaper. Written with affection for Charlotte's favorite son and richly illustrated from the *Charlotte Observer's* archives.

- Nancy Gibbs and Michael Duffy, *The Preacher and the Presidents: Billy Graham in the White House* (2007). Two veteran *Time* magazine journalists track the way Graham and the politicians he ministered to influenced each other.

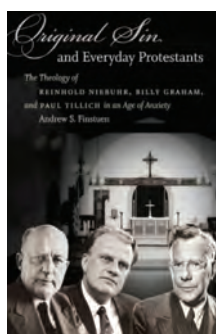


SIX IMPORTANT AND INFLUENTIAL BOOKS BY BILLY GRAHAM

1. *Peace with God* (1953, rev. 1984)
2. *Angels: God's Secret Agents* (1975)
3. *How to Be Born Again* (1977)
4. *World Aflame* (1965)
5. *The Jesus Generation* (1971)
6. *The Journey: Living by Faith in an Uncertain World* (2006)

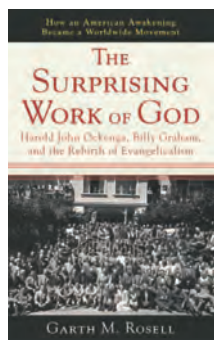
SIX BOOKS TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT OF BILLY GRAHAM'S MINISTRY

- Andrew S. Finstuen, *Original Sin and Everyday Protestants: The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr, Billy Graham, and*



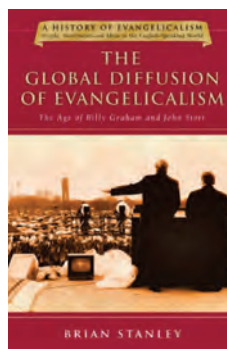
Paul Tillich in an Age of Anxiety (2009). America's Christians in the middle of the twentieth century weren't as upbeat and shallow as many suppose. These three influential thinkers gained prominence precisely because their theology took evil seriously.

- Steven P. Miller, *Billy Graham and the Rise of the Republican South* (2009). Traces Graham's role in helping the South say good-bye to Jim Crow and to Democratic Party dominance.



- Garth M. Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism* (2008). Tells how a Boston pastor brought Billy Graham's evangelistic energies to the Northeast and then worked with him to nurture evangelical institutions of national influence.

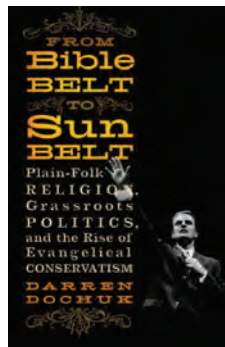
- Brian Stanley, *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Billy Graham and John Stott* (2013). In the second half of the twentieth century, the evangelical movement spread from the British Isles and America to Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Graham,



Stott, and others created networks and resourced preachers and teachers from the Global South.

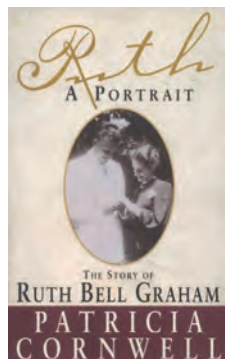
- George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (2010). Marsden, who famously defined an evangelical as "anyone who likes Billy Graham," surveys this constantly evolving religious movement.

- Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (2012). Beginning in the 1930s, southern preachers in California laid the groundwork for locally oriented, “color blind,” probusiness, anticommunist politics among newly prosperous suburban congregations. Graham’s stunning success in Los Angeles and his friendship with Ronald Reagan helped mainstream this movement.



IN ADDITION ...

- Patricia Cornwell, *Ruth, a Portrait: The Story of Ruth Bell Graham* (1997). A newspaper crime reporter turned novelist draws on her deep personal relationship with Ruth Graham.
- Marshall Frady, *Billy Graham: A Parable of American Righteousness* (1979). At times irreverent and angry, this perceptive reporter effectively sets Graham in his cultural context as an idealized icon of America’s hoped-for innocence.



ALSO WATCH FOR ...

- A new edition of William Martin’s *Prophet with Honor* to be published after Graham’s death
- A major biography of Ruth Graham by historian Anne Blue Wills
- *American Pilgrim: The Worlds of Billy Graham*, scholarly essays exploring the intersection between Graham’s career and American culture, edited by Andrew Finstuen, Anne Blue Wills, and Grant Wacker

ON THE WEB

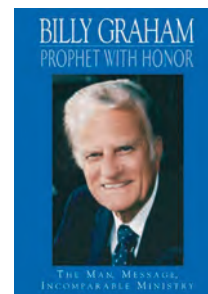
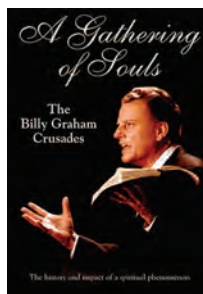
- The Billy Graham Center Archives. The premier collection of documents and artifacts related to twentieth-century evangelism and the work of Billy Graham is housed at Wheaton College, his alma mater. The website catalogs many of these documents and offers photos, excerpts of oral history interviews, and 66,000 pages of digitized sermon materials. www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/archhp1.html
- Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Offers audio recordings of 1,600 Billy Graham sermons as well as general information about Graham’s organization and its ongoing ministries. www.BillyGraham.org

- Billy Graham Library. Take a virtual tour of the Billy Graham Library, explore video clips and photographs, and plan your visit to this Charlotte, North Carolina, attraction. www.BillyGrahamLibrary.org




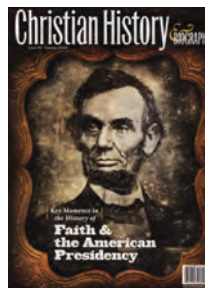
RELATED DVDS AVAILABLE FROM VISION VIDEO

- *A Gathering of Souls*, 2014 video history of the Graham crusades
- *My Hope America with Billy Graham*, a three-DVD set featuring over seven hours of content
- *Common Ground*, a 2002 documentary featuring those touched by Billy Graham’s ministry
- *Billy Graham: Prophet with Honor*, 1989 television special hosted by David Frost

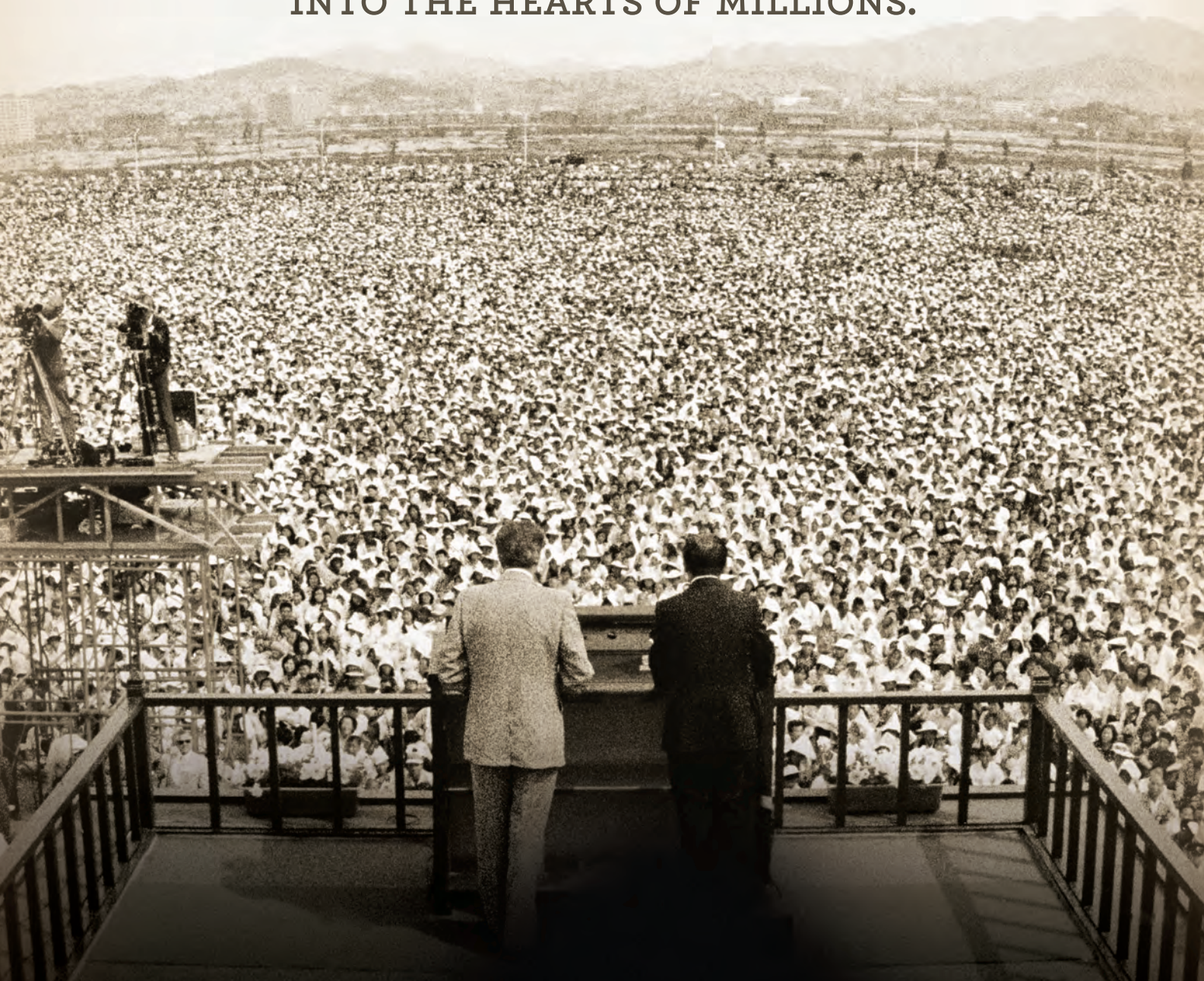


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