

Florida Baptist Historical Society
MONOGRAPH

September, 2022

**The Rise of Billy Graham:
The Media and His Message
During the 1950s**

By

Dr. David T. Crum
Assistant Professor of History,
Truett-McConnell University.



Published by the
Florida Baptist Historical Society
Graceville, Florida

Copyright 2022. All rights reserved.

About the Author/Dr. David T. Crum

Dr. David T. Crum is an on-line Assistant Professor of History at Truett-McConnell University. Additionally, Dr. Crum serves as the on-line Dissertation Chair and Adjunct History Professor for Liberty University. In addition to the B.S. degree, Dr. Crum holds two M.A. degrees (Theological Studies and History, respectively) and the earned Doctor of Philosophy degree in Historical Theology.

Abstract

Billy Graham rose to fame during his 1949 Los Angeles Crusade. The media immediately followed Graham, resulting in him becoming a household name. The 1950s paved the way for Graham and his future crusades. Studying the impact of the media and his message remains imperative in understanding how Graham became the most famous Baptist in the world. His evangelistic method was unique and not without controversy. Nevertheless, his impact on soul winning is experienced even today.

Introduction

Following World War II, the United States was involved in several other international conflicts, including the Korean and Cold Wars. American citizens were confused, angry, and nervous. The creation of the atomic bomb had an everlasting impact on society. Many people turned to religion for answers in such a dark time. With many unknowns, the 1950s was the perfect platform for evangelists such as Billy Graham, as people appeared to be spiritually confused and hungry for the Word of God. It remains critical to study Graham's impact on the 1950s, as sociological and psychological factors appeared to be correlated with his religious message.

Graham received success with his famous Los Angeles Crusade in 1949. Soon after, newspapers and magazines followed him across the world. Stadiums and auditoriums sold out worldwide. His message was well received. One must always bear in mind the media's impact on Graham and his success. Graham found himself a household name, as several major news outlets, such as *Time Magazine*, *Reader's Digest*, and *American Weekly*, followed him extensively. News reporters covered his teachings on societal issues. His popularity was undeniable as his message was published across the world.

The Beginning: Media Coverage

With the end of World War II and tension starting to build with the Soviet Union, the American people were simply uneasy regarding their future. In America, communism was despised as politicians and the news media portrayed this form of government as nothing less than pure evil. Communism grew rapidly in nations such as China and North Korea. Graham taught that communism "was the political ideology of the devil."¹

The idea of turning to Christianity in dark times is not new. From World War II to the more recent terrorist attacks of September 11, many people tend to look for spiritual answers when confronted with darkness. With a constant fear of conflict with the Soviet Union, Graham arguably grew in fame due to his message of repentance, hope, and peace. The emphasis was placed on peace within each individual conversion.

Graham's rise to fame came in 1949 while preaching in the Los Angeles Crusade. Two days prior to "the start of the rally, the Soviet Union successfully tested the atomic bomb."² Leading "newspaper magnate" William Randolph Hearst ordered his publishers to follow Graham and "puff his message."³ The "eight-week tent revival resulted in the attendance of over 350,000 people from the L.A. area."⁴

Hearst built the nation's "largest newspaper and came from a bloodline of journalists."⁵ With his endorsement, Graham's success and message became even more widespread. This was evident when Graham appeared "on the cover of the *Time Magazine*."⁶ David Aikman, a biographer of Graham, argued the following: "Graham's theatrical style of preaching recalled some of the

¹ Alan Scot Willis, *All According to God's Plan: Southern Baptist Missions and Race 1945-1970*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2005), 58.

² Public Broadcasting Service, "People & Ideas: Billy Graham," 2010, accessed February 1, 2022, <http://www.pbs.org/godinamerica/people/billy-graham.html>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Paul Johnson, *A History of the American People*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 1997), 839.

⁵ Public Broadcasting Service, "People & Ideas".

⁶ Ibid.

greatest preachers of past revivals: Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, and of course Billy Sunday."⁷ His message of repentance resonated with many of his crowds.

Initially, not everyone was so welcoming of Graham's preaching. Some British newspapers and media members initially "mocked" Graham and thought his message was absurd.⁸ Likewise, some more liberal Christians felt Graham "was putting Christianity back hundreds of years."⁹ Graham preached against sin and taught that individuals must be accountable for their own actions.

Nevertheless, Graham was gaining coverage, which filled seats. *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines covered Graham's initial revival in Los Angeles.¹⁰ Sharing the personal testimonies of influential people such as Louis Zamperini, these magazines caught their readers' attention.¹¹ Zamperini, an Olympic runner and Japanese prisoner of war, made several trips to the L.A. crusades, eventually "surrendering his life to Christ."¹² Another well-known convert and personal friend of John Wayne, Stuart Hamblen, "gave his life to Christ" and stopped drinking alcohol.¹³ In fact, he gave up thousands of dollars in advertisement income when he stopped promoting alcohol. Following the L.A. crusades, Graham packed up and headed to Boston. By the time Graham arrived in the city, his teachings were widely publicized across the country. The public was anxiously awaiting his arrival.

The Boston Post reporters attended his January 16 revival in which "16,000 people filled the arena which only seated 13,000."¹⁴ One writer noted, "Franklin D. Roosevelt had never drawn such numbers in Boston."¹⁵ The New England media urged Graham to stay in the area for the following weeks inviting him to "preach from town to town."¹⁶ In his book, *The Billy Graham Story*, Charles T. Cook wrote, "The effort was warmly supported by the three local daily newspapers; *The Boston Post*, in particular, made the campaign the main front-page news, with many pictures."¹⁷

Cook mentioned there was only one news outlet that truly ignored Graham, and that was "*The Christian Science Monitor*."¹⁸ Often referred to as "the modern prophet," Graham was followed worldwide. Stanley High of *Reader's Digest* labeled Graham as "sincere and humble" as people gravitated to his message.¹⁹ High had the personal task of covering Graham exclusively and following his campaign from city to city. High remained shocked as Graham spent hours in

⁷ David Aikman, *Billy Graham: His Life and Influence*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 68.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 71.

¹⁰ John Pollock, *Crusades: 20 Years with Billy Graham*, (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1966), 68.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 69.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Pollock, *Crusades: 20 Years with Billy Graham*, 71.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 74.

¹⁷ Charles T. Cook, *The Billy Graham Story*, (Wheaton: Van Kampen Press, 1954), 25.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Stanley High, *Billy Graham: The Personal Story of the Man, His Message, and His Mission*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956), 16.

individual interviews and always "gave his success to God."²⁰ He mentioned that "it would have a personal impact on his own life, accompanying Graham across the world."²¹

Philip Santora of the *New York Daily News* remained skeptical regarding Graham and his true intentions.²² This soon changed as he noted that one must spend "quality time with Graham to dissect his true motives."²³ Santora argued, "He is a dedicated person who believes in what he is teaching, whose aim in life is to harvest as many souls as possible."²⁴ It was not long before Graham was identified as a "machine gun" for God. Regarding his teachings on the idea of the Christian end times (eschatology), Graham held the premillennial view and supported the idea of the rapture.²⁵ This played a crucial role in his campaigns as "Graham argued the rapture could occur anywhere from 15-50 years from now."²⁶ Such messages challenged his audience as a potential return of Jesus Christ to judge the world made many who were not living for God uneasy.

News journalist Sherwood Wirt of the *San Francisco Examiner* stated that Graham made an impact on him personally and covering him was a "true inspiration and rewarding experience."²⁷ Wirt emphasized that the audience "trusted Graham" and truly felt loved by God when in Graham's presence.²⁸ The consensus was that the preachers' humility and friendliness won over journalists' hearts. Wirt wrote:

The evangelist inveighed against racial intolerance, bigotry, slum housing, character assassination, the arms race, communism, a foreign policy based on "self-interest," alcohol, and exploitation in labor relations.²⁹

Graham even embraced the idea of racial integration. In 1953, Graham "personally removed the rope that separated blacks and whites during his Chattanooga Crusade."³⁰ In a Dallas crusade, "black attendees crossed the white line to hear Graham."³¹ Historian Thomas Kidd noted that "some have cited the action of the black attendees as among the earliest acts of civil disobedience in the civil rights movement."³² Graham preached to people of all races and sought souls across the globe.

Charles T. Cook, who wrote for *The Christian* in the United Kingdom, was overjoyed when Graham decided to embark on the London Crusade.³³ Heavily criticized and personally insulted by many in the English news media, Cook remained adamant that Graham could succeed in

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² High, *Billy Graham: The Personal Story of the Man, His Message, and His Mission*, 19.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Aikman, *Billy Graham*, 70.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Sherwood Eliot Wirt, *Crusade at the Golden Gate* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 11.

²⁸ Ibid., 45.

²⁹ Wirt, *Crusade at the Golden Gate*, 46.

³⁰ Thomas S. Kidd and Barry Hankins, *A History Baptists in America* (New York: Oxford Press, 2015), 211.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Charles T. Cook, *London Hears Billy Graham* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1954), 14.

London.³⁴ The journalist knew that Christianity was "on the decline in the United Kingdom" but remained confident that Graham could awaken the crowds.³⁵

The British media found themselves covering him extensively. Initially, the British papers assumed that his American success would not be repeated in the United Kingdom. They were wrong, as the London Crusade had "10,000 to 12,000" attendees the first few nights.³⁶ Soon BBC Television was airing "his sermons, and millions of viewers" were watching Graham.³⁷ His revival meetings grew as "40,000 English men, women and children filled Haringay Arena."³⁸ On Graham's success in England, Cook explained, "No preacher in history has ever faced an audience as large as Billy Graham had at Wembley."³⁹ Soon, Graham was preaching to well over "185,000 people at Wembley Stadium, marking a world record in attendance."⁴⁰ Success followed, as "10,000 to 12,000" people would walk forward and "accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior."⁴¹ Graham made history because his message was genuine and extremely powerful. In the 1950s, "Graham was noted as the Greatest Baptist in the World."⁴²

Perhaps the news media and their willingness to follow Graham helped explain his worldwide popularity. As his popularity grew, so did his success. The late theologian and historian Edwin Gaustad wrote the following: "With Graham's strong backing and with members of his family directly involved, the conservative journal *Christianity Today* was launched in 1956. This magazine gave his movement not only visibility but respectability as well."⁴³

One cannot deny the importance of the media that promoted Graham. The key to understanding his message was found within the people who flocked to hear him speak. Souls were longing for something that Graham provided. Graham spoke of revivals and the need for a Great Awakening, which often led people to compare him to Jonathan Edwards.⁴⁴

His Message

Graham's message was clear; he urged his audience to "repent of their sin and trust in Jesus Christ." He condemned "materialism, paganism, and humanism."⁴⁵ Graham preached the government itself was responsible for blinding the eyes of Americans as an evil doctrine was being taught across the country, starting in the school system.⁴⁶ He remained optimistic that morality was the key to prosperity on the personal and national levels. The "Ten Commandments" were the moral code by which Graham preached all should live.⁴⁷ He insisted that the individual reflect on God and make Him the priority in one's life. Graham preached the following:

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 15.

³⁶ Cook, *London Hears Billy Graham*, 45.

³⁷ Cook, *London Hears Billy Graham*, 50.

³⁸ Ibid., 51.

³⁹ Ibid., 71.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 75.

⁴² Kidd and Hankins, *A History Baptists in America*, 201.

⁴³ Edwin Gaustad and Leigh Schmidt, *The Religious History of America* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 336.

⁴⁴ Pollock, *Crusades*, 73.

⁴⁵ Billy Graham, *Revival in our Time: The Story of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Campaigns including Six of his Sermons*, (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1951), 71.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

It is impossible to find out about the phenomena of life if you leave God out. Leave God out of everyday life contacts and you have the Bolshevism of Russian and the misery of anarchism. Leave God out of government and you have poverty and despair in the nation. Leave God out of your home and you have the thing that comes before my eyes every week I live of some man and woman making a shipwreck of possibilities of peace and happiness that God gave to them when He made the institution of marriage.⁴⁸

He explained that God was an "Almighty God who was loving, yet just in His punishments and judgment."⁴⁹ He preached the following: "Now for the first time in the history of the world, we have the weapon with which to destroy ourselves – the atomic bomb."⁵⁰ According to Graham, immorality was destroying America, and it started in the home.⁵¹ From divorce to a lack of love for their spouses and children, he remained steadfast that America's problems were tied to individual families.⁵² If you could morally confront the family at home, you could fix the nation.

However, if one embraced sin, the result was destruction from God. Graham went as far as comparing the fall of France in WWII to the Israelites of the Bible. He argued that judgment came from a just, holy God who punished wickedness. This same message awoke the L.A. Crusade audience. Graham challenged his contemporaries, especially psychologists, and urged adults to "discipline their children in the love of God."⁵³

Often starting his messages by stating, "People, prepare to meet thy God", Graham taught his crowds about death. Judgment is coming; he would declare, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Jesus Christ."⁵⁴ Nations who lacked faith or had no relationship with Jesus possessed no hope, and Graham often cited England and France as examples.⁵⁵

Graham said America could be blessed by God like Israel only if the people united as Christians.⁵⁶ The key was Jesus Christ. Christ was the one who could change a person's heart and a nation's ways. Repentance defined as "turning away from sin" was directly connected to faith and salvation found in Jesus Christ.⁵⁷ The dead must be awoken, Graham preached, and Christ was the only one who could bring one back to life. Graham preached:

What about you? What does a man go to hell for? Not for getting drunk, cursing, committing adultery, or lying. The only thing that will send a man to hell is rejecting Jesus Christ. The question on the day of judgment will be, what did you do with Jesus? God knows that you have a chance right now to accept His Son as Savior. What are you going to do with it?⁵⁸

⁴⁸ Jerry Beavan, *America's Hour of Decision*, (Wheaton: Van Kampen Press, 1951), 136.

⁴⁹ Graham, *Revival in our Time*, 72.

⁵⁰ Graham, *Revival in our Time*, 73.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 93.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Graham, *Revival in our Time*, 160.

⁵⁷ Millard J. Erickson, *The Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology*, (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001), 169.

⁵⁸ Graham, *Revival in our Time*, 165.

Public Reaction

In 1954, Graham preached the San Francisco Civic Auditorium.⁵⁹ He was already well known by this time, and "14,000 people arrived to hear the Word of God."⁶⁰ Some people with no religious beliefs attended out of mere curiosity.⁶¹ Adults arrived independently, while young children participated with their parents. Nonetheless, his impact was felt among all age groups, and conversions to Christianity were made. Following each city crusade, Bible studies were organized to assist people's spiritual journeys. In San Francisco, "44 percent of the audience signed up for these follow-up Bible studies and counseling sessions."⁶² Volunteers worked long hours to assist new believers in gaining and strengthening their relationship with Jesus Christ.⁶³

A crusade was not just one meeting; Graham and his team sought to gather crowds for days upon weeks in each city they visited. The concept was to create massive revival gatherings that the attendees would share with their friends and loved ones. Soon Graham made history selling out entire stadiums in record numbers. Even politicians and the President were aware of Graham and his popularity. David Aikman notes:

In June 1953, he achieved something of a milestone in a crusade in Dallas, filling the 75,504 seats in the Cotton Bowl Stadium in what at that time was the largest evangelical meeting in American history. Reporters were constantly at his side, prodding him for his opinion on a range of topics, many of which he had little expertise in.⁶⁴

Aikman continued: "Many Americans listened to Graham more than they listened to the President."⁶⁵ Graham challenged liberal thinking and sought biblical morals in a dying society. His impact on President Eisenhower was evident, as Eisenhower implemented many biblical principles while in office.⁶⁶ Eisenhower was "baptized" shortly after becoming President. In 1954, he signed a bill that required one nation under God to be added to the pledge of allegiance.

By 1956, the U.S. promoted the motto In God We Trust. Perhaps politicians knew Graham could assist them in reaching Christians in tight political races. Although it was not politics that Graham was concerned about, he sought to spread his message from city to city. New Yorkers showed up in record numbers to hear Graham preach. Madison Square Garden consistently sold out for the weeks that Graham remained in the city.⁶⁷ Over 125,000 people marched on "Broadway, earnestly awaiting his message."⁶⁸ People from all walks of life attended. From "college students, teenagers, dedicated Christians and those who claimed no spirituality, they all were anxious to hear the preaching."⁶⁹ One-fourth of the crowd "accepted an invitation for Christ."⁷⁰ A New York City psychiatrist attended the fourth night of the revival with the sole

⁵⁹ Wirt, *Crusade at the Golden Gate*, 29.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 148.

⁶² Wirt, *Crusade at the Golden Gate*, 150.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Aikman, *Billy Graham*, 80.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Curtis Mitchell, *God in the Garden: The Amazing Story of Billy Graham's First New York Crusade*, (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1957), 9.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁰ Mitchell, *God in the Garden: The Amazing Story of Billy Graham's First New York*, 11.

purpose of analyzing the group; he ultimately made a decision for Christ.⁷¹ He later would write, "I came to analyze but learned that I was the one being analyzed."⁷²

Author of *God in the Garden: The Story of Billy Graham's First New York Crusade* Curtis Mitchell noted the following: "A special effort was made to reach the ten thousand foreign students in New York, many of whom were from countries that prohibited the entry of Christian missionaries."⁷³ This effort proved successful, as "Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists" were converted to Christianity.⁷⁴ The New York crusades were momentous as the sermons preached were widely publicized worldwide. Many followers wrote in with their interest and comments. One man from Buffalo noted, "I am a good church member but found I was not a Christian at heart. Your sermons have opened my eyes and my heart."⁷⁵ Even children wrote in. One child stated, "Please tell me what I can do each day to improve myself as a Christian. I have been reading the Bible every day. I am ten years old."⁷⁶

Graham's message impacted many, even soldiers. *Reader's Digest* editor Stanley High shared the testimony of Louis Zamperini, one of the famous converts of the L.A. Crusade. He was a "World War II veteran who was a fighter pilot shot down in the Pacific."⁷⁷ Zamperini was a prisoner of war labeled as one of the dozen soldiers who suffered the most in WWII.⁷⁸ His wife urged him to attend a revival, to which he reluctantly agreed. On one of the visits, by the end of the sermon, he was in "tears accepting Jesus Christ."⁷⁹ At the bottom of his heart, he realized he was a sinner in need of salvation and realized he lacked a forgiving heart toward the Japanese prison guards who tortured him daily.⁸⁰ This troubled him deeply, and he reached out to every Japanese prison guard he could find to "share the news of Jesus Christ."⁸¹ Many of these guards were in prison themselves, and he wrote them constantly with "love, encouragement, and forgiveness."⁸² Later he met many of his captors.

Decisions for Christ were being made in families across the globe. It was uncommon to find a family in the country that did not know someone who attended a revival meeting. Attendees sent in decision cards to the campaign headquarters in record numbers, and "lives were changing."⁸³ Decision cards were received daily from "academic professors, famous athletes, FBI agents, and even corrupt gamblers."⁸⁴ Sociologists in cities such as Seattle were amazed by moral statistics and changes, such as a lower divorce rate and a rise in church attendance.⁸⁵ By the end of 1959, 65 percent of Americans attended church regularly.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., 92.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Mitchell, *God in the Garden: The Amazing Story of Billy Graham's First New York Crusade*, 120.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 121.

⁷⁷ High, *Billy Graham*, 225.

⁷⁸ High, *Billy Graham*, 225.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 256.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Cook, *The Billy Graham Story*, 44.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 44.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

The message of Billy Graham's crusades was simple. They sought to win over as many people for Christ as possible in every city they visited. They encouraged local churches and leaders to teach about God and His ways."⁸⁶ While genuine conversions were sometimes difficult to achieve, Graham's impact on the cities he visited cannot be denied. Providing counseling services, heartfelt sermons, and community assistance, Graham's team of evangelists touched towns across the globe.⁸⁷

It is important to note that not everyone embraced Graham and his message. Some people in and outside of the Christian church heavily criticized Graham. Several Christians "condemned" Graham for working with denominations outside the "Baptist faith."⁸⁸ One major criticism was that Graham invited and embraced "liberal Christians to partake in his crusades."⁸⁹ Furthermore, several evangelical Christians strongly disagreed with the "altar call" approach to salvation. These critics remained adamant that Graham confused or misled souls who "walked forward for a decision."⁹⁰ According to his critics, one did not decide for Christ, God found them and opened their hearts in forgiveness and grace. Graham's circle responded by remaining positive that "salvation" was a work of God, and Christian unity was commanded per scripture.⁹¹

Outside of the Christian church, Graham was labeled a "fundamentalist."⁹² He was often referred to as a "modern-day Pharisee" preaching lies and hate.⁹³ One anonymous attendee in New York City wrote the following: "If their effort succeeds, it will make mincemeat of the ecumenical movement and set Christianity back half a century."⁹⁴ From psychologists to academic professors, it was apparent that some were alarmed with the rapid success Graham was achieving because it challenged modern-day thinking on critical issues such as Darwin's Theory and immorality.⁹⁵ Interestingly, this was Graham's goal. He sought to confront secular humanism and place biblical morality at the forefront of people's minds. Many Christian leaders challenged Graham's campaign in massive crowds. One question often asked was how could anyone know for sure attendees remained in the faith and became genuine converts.

Regardless of the criticism, Graham's crowds continued to grow, as did his ministry. His popularity was undeniable. Graham revisited cities such as Los Angeles and Boston, where it all started. On a rainy day in Boston on his return trip in 1951, "50,000" showed up at the Boston Common to hear him preach.⁹⁶ In 1954, Graham arrived in Detroit and preached at "Briggs Sports Stadium" with a record-breaking audience one Sunday afternoon.⁹⁷ It would be the "largest religious gathering in Michigan state history."⁹⁸ The Graham camp remained

⁸⁶ Wirt, *Crusade at the Golden Gate*, 147.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁸⁸ Robert O. Ferm, *Cooperative Evangelism: Is Billy Graham Right or Wrong?*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), 19.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Ferm, *Cooperative Evangelism: Is Billy Graham Right or Wrong*, 19.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁹² Ferm, *Cooperative Evangelism: Is Billy Graham Right or Wrong*, 15.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁹⁶ Cook, *The Billy Graham Story*, 26.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

encouraged and adamant that they should continue their "crusades" worldwide. For them, this crusade would never end as it was simply a mission for God.

Graham's legacy started in the 1950s and continued until his death. Graham was credited with "leading President George H.W. Bush" in making a decision for Christ. He met every living president, from President Truman to President Barack Obama, during his lifetime. Upon the cancellation of air traffic following the horrors of September 11, President George W. Bush allowed only one plane to enter the sky, the one carrying Billy Graham.

Conclusion

Graham's success started at a time when humanity was looking for answers. Suffering from fear and immorality, people were intrigued by Graham's message of love and hope. Following WWII and the constant threat of communism and the atomic bomb, Americans lived in fear. Graham's heartfelt lessons provided many with peace. While not every person agreed with Graham, his dedication was admired. Countless writers with no personal attachment to him described him as genuine, caring, and passionate. Some even converted to Christianity. He preached for God and not for himself. He had a message for all people.

His success is apparent, as the recent series *My Hope America* challenges current generations. While he has since passed, his ministry still seeks to proclaim the Word of God to all who will hear. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association remains a widespread outreach organization that enables visitors to speak with Christians in real time online and on the phone.

Similar to the 1950s, there remain realistic threats to families, national security, and individual salvation. If one disagrees with Graham's evangelistic methods, they can appreciate the love he shared with millions of souls.

While not every Christian may possess the powerful and unique voice that Graham was blessed with, he nonetheless encourages believers today that they can make a difference in a fallen world. People such as Graham often make legacies. He was arguably the most influential Christian preacher of the modern era. Graham continues to be an intriguing figure in Christianity. Perhaps the most important lesson learned while studying Graham and his success is the ultimate impact that the Gospel of Jesus Christ can and will have on ordinary people. Graham encouraged the Christian individual to reach out to others for Christ and His kingdom.