

# Extra resources

## Billy Graham - Lyfe story

Born: November 7 1918 in Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Spouse: Ruth Graham Bell (died 2007)

Children: Franklin, Nelson, Virginia, Anne and Ruth

Billy Graham was born during the tumultuous context of World War and the great depression. Entering the world during a time of deep uncertainty and despair, Billy Graham would bring the hope and life of the Gospel to millions of people around the world. His was a life of unusual clarity and conviction. He declared that 'My one purpose in life is to help people find a personal relationship with God, which, I believe comes through knowing Christ.' A life that continues to be dedicated to this task offers the paradigmatic model of a word-centred life.

As a teenager, Billy Graham experienced a radical conversion resulting from the preaching of the wonderfully-named Mordecai Ham, a fiery evangelist. As a student at Florida Bible Institute, he immersed himself in the Bible and began to sense the call to give his life to preaching. After obtaining an undergraduate degree from Wheaton College he became a Pastor before becoming an evangelist with Youth for Christ. The 'tipping point' of Billy Graham's life came in a tent in Los Angeles, California in 1949. With little initial publicity and media attention, a series of evangelistic meetings were held that resulted in the transformation of Billy Graham from being an unknown preacher to a household name synonymous with mass evangelism. The meetings were originally scheduled for three weeks but ended up running for eight as a move of God resulted in many of what Billy Graham referred to as 'decisions for Christ'. Public figures, sports stars and famous businessmen were among those who committed their lives to following Christ. Following on from Los Angeles, Billy Graham began to take his evangelistic message throughout the world. He has preached to both heads of state and Australian bushmen. He has held meetings in Madison Square Gardens and in African deserts. He has been to 185 countries and territories, with over 215 million people responding to his message of salvation.

These facts and figures are astonishing and defy belief. Yet what is perhaps equally remarkable is the way that Billy Graham's life has mirrored his message. Ours is a time where the moral failures of those that lead a public life, whether politicians, pastors or sports stars, are all too familiar and predictable. In contrast, Billy Graham's life has held up under the unforgiving scrutiny of the media. His commitment to live with integrity the message he preaches is what marks him as embodying a Word-centred life. The evangelical stream is one that focuses on the proclamation of the evangel, the good news, through both speaking and embodying the message of salvation.

### Further resources

[www.billygraham.org](http://www.billygraham.org)

*Billy Graham, Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham* (New York: Harper One, 2007).

*Billy Graham, evangelist to the world: An authorized biography* by John Pollock