

CLASSIFIEDS/COMMUNITY



By: Sherry Brown

The Story of How God called Billy Graham

Friend, I was raised up listening to Billy Graham as my parents loved his wonderful ministry.

Article taken from Billy Graham Association

From humble beginnings into what has become a globally recognized ministry speaks of God’s faithfulness in response to simple obedience.

From the Farm

Billy Graham was born on November 7, 1918 in a frame house on a North Carolina dairy farm. Like many others in their day, his parents were hard-working people who knew the value of a dollar and the meaning of self-discipline. Perhaps less ordinary, however, was their belief in God and devotion to seeking His wisdom and blessing for their family and for a world in need.

To them, the Bible was the very Word of God, and their prayers declared their dependence on Him through any circumstance. As the times proved, circumstances were trying and challenging. From drought to depression, dust and destitution, people everywhere desperately searched the horizon for hope, that place where answers to prayer lives. God’s faithfulness, as always, would prove gracious and absolute.

To the Pasture

In a time of penny candy, nickel sodas, hair tonic, blushing brides, travelling preachers, and Sunday suppers, people were optimistic and busy. With so many other things to do, most young people were not thinking about things like Christian service and dying to self. Although it is true that Billy Graham enjoyed having fun, there was more. Somewhere deep, something fundamental was working inside him.

In May of 1934, the Christian businessmen of Charlotte, NC, secured permis-

Encouragement That Takes You Higher

sion to hold an all-day prayer meeting at the Graham farm. On that day, a prayer was raised – that out of Charlotte the Lord would raise up someone to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

It was in that year the previously reluctant Billy Graham gave his life to the Lord at a revival meeting led by traveling evangelist Rev. Mordecai Ham. At 16 years old, Billy Graham was about to experience the transformation of a traditional farm boy into an instrument of God.

In the Woods

In a time of burgeoning modernism, of science and philosophy, Billy Graham walked in the woods one night seeking God’s direction for his faith. The answer? The Bible – sealed by a prayer: “Father, I am going to accept this as Thy Word – by faith! I’m going to allow faith to go beyond my intellectual questions and doubts, and I will believe this to be Your inspired Word.”

Preaching Career Begins

After graduating from high school, Billy enrolled at Florida Bible Institute, now Trinity College, and began to lead prayer meetings at a nearby trailer park and downtown mission hall. He also preached at a local church, as an ordained minister of the Southern Baptist Convention. Other churches began inviting him to speak.

In 1940, Billy enrolled at Wheaton College in Wheaton, IL, studying anthropology. He graduated in 1943 and two months later married a fellow student – Ruth McCue Bell, whose parents were missionaries in China. Billy applied to become a U.S. Army chaplain but was told he needed pastoral experience first, and therefore accepted a call to a small Baptist church in Western Springs, IL.

While there, he was offered the opportunity to host a 45-minute religious pro-

gram called “Songs in the Night” on Chicago’s largest radio station. It was there he met and became friends with Canada’s George Beverly Shea, a soloist on the show.

In 1945, Billy was invited to become the first full-time organizer for Youth for Christ – establishing a lifelong path for him as an evangelist.

National Profile

Four years later, while Billy was conducting evangelistic meetings in Los Angeles, the news media began covering him. There were local stories, but also in the wire services and in Time, Life and Newsweek magazines. What was initially supposed to be a few weeks of meetings attracted such large crowds that they continued for months.

Shortly afterward, Billy began a national weekly radio program – “The Hour of Decision” – that continues today on hundreds of stations in the U.S., Canada and overseas.

During this very busy period, it became apparent that a formal organization would be needed to manage the growing momentum of a ministry that was once informally known as the Graham-Barrows Campaigns. In 1950, papers for incorporation were filed in St. Paul, MN, and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) was born with the following mission: “to take the message of Christ to all we can by every effective means available to us.”

Since then, the BGEA has been comprised of a team of men and women who work and pray, behind the scenes and in plain view, to make it all possible. “We have a whole team of people and most of us have been together for nearly 50 years. I’m introduced as though I’m doing it all . . . but it’s the Lord using this group of people,” Dr. Graham said.

Around the World

“I have had the privilege of preaching the Gospel on every continent in most of the countries of the world. And I have found that when I present the simple message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ . . . He takes that message and drives it supernaturally into the human heart,” said Dr. Graham.

God’s word was spoken through Billy Graham in humble sincerity to millions over the decades. Of himself he admitted, “I am not a great preacher, and I don’t claim to be a great preacher . . . I’m just communicating the Gospel in the best way I know how.”

Frequent and extensive travel exposed many of the realities of human suffering, a fact which prompted the BGEA to form the World Emergency Fund in 1973. When people began seeing Christ’s love in action, even more doors for evangelism opened. By the end of the 20th Century, Billy Graham had preached the Gospel on every inhabited continent.

Today, the same message is communicated to hundreds of thousands, bridging gaps of distance and change. Of this new day, Dr. Graham said, “God has given us new tools to do His work – electronic and visual tools, such as radio, films, television, and telephones – and each of these has played an important role in the expansion of our ministry.”

From living room audiences, gathered around radios and television sets, to packed stadiums, images of God at work in the world are entrenched in the hearts and memories of generations. Taken literally is the invitation to “come just as you are” to Christ, and countless lives begin anew.

Community Calendar

- Bath

Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 143

Meets every 3rd Saturday of the month at at 1 p.m. at the Salt Lick Fire Department, 164 Main Street, Salt Lick.

Serving Bath, Fleming, Menifee, Montgomery, and Rowan Counties.

Contact Timothy Browning at 606-359-1233
- Kentucky Meat Shower Festival

Saturday, March 1, 12 – 5 p.m., around the old Bath County Courthouse

Chili Cookoff, Games, Vendors, and Giveaways and More!

Sample of the original 1876 meat will be on display at the Bath County History Museum
- April 5

Bath County Search & Rescue Fundraiser

Owingsville Lions Club Park, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Fish Fry, Cruise-In, Bounce House, Vendor Fair, Silent Auction, Dunking Booth

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(125 FOXGLOVE DR. #1, MT. STERLNG, KY)

MARCH 6TH, 13TH, 20TH, 27TH FROM 10A.M. TO 4P.M.

JIM WILL BE AT MED SAVE

(136 JESSICA LANE, OLIVE HILL, KY)

MARCH 7TH, 14TH, 16TH, 21ST, 28TH FROM 10 A.M. TO 4P.M.

