



The Billy Graham Story: The Authorized Biography

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An updated account of the inspiring and influential life of Dr. Billy Graham

When the hijacked planes slammed into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, President Bush immediately proclaimed a National Day of Prayer and Remembrance. For the interfaith, interdenominational service at the Washington National Cathedral he chose Billy Graham to give the address. At that terrible hour no other clergyman, whatever his office, could so aptly bring the Word of God to America---and a watching world.

At eighty-four, Billy Graham remains one of the most respected people in the world today. He has addressed over eighty-two million people face to face and at least one billion people through television, radio, and satellite. Yet he is far more than an evangelist of integrity and vision; he is a Christian statesman whose profound influence on the growth and depth of Christianity across the world cannot be overestimated.

This official biography of Dr. Graham is based on his private files, correspondence, and interviews, as well as the author's widespread research.

* Written by John Pollock, Dr. Graham's official biographer

* Parts one and two (1918 to 1978), based on Pollock's authorized biographies, have been abridged and contain new material

* Part three (1978 to 1983) deals at length with Dr. Graham's controversial visit to Moscow, which can now be seen as a factor in the fall of communism

* Part four (1984 to 2003) updates the story to recent events, including the horrors of September 11 and the honorary knighthood Dr. Graham received from the Queen of England in December 2001

* 8-page section of black-and-white photos new to this book

The Billy Graham Story: The Authorized Biography Details

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Natalie Vellacott says

"Human nature is the same the world over, and when the Gospel of Christ is preached in simplicity and power, there is a response in the human soul."

I decided it was appropriate to read this due to the recent passing of Billy Graham at the grand age of 99! I have often wondered about his crusades and mass conversion techniques as I know of people who were converted during them, but also some who are vehemently opposed to Graham's methods. There is no doubt that he was a controversial figure. I was reminded of the late David Wilkerson as similar praise and reservations accompanied his ministry.

Unfortunately, I was unable to properly evaluate Graham's ministry due to this being such a poorly written biography. I gave up half way through as the author just lists details of rallies, places, and numbers of conversions. There is little about the man himself or his motivations. The book is also extremely biased in favour of Graham and makes little attempt to investigate his failings alongside his strengths. I guess I should have anticipated this as it is the "authorized biography." However, I would have expected Graham himself to endorse a more realistic picture of his life and ministry.

I had cause to listen to one of Graham's rallies on Youtube recently as a non-Christian friend asked me about it. He had watched "So, who is Jesus?" after seeing the publicity about Graham's death. The Gospel is presented in the message but it is somewhat obscured by the many references to doing good deeds, as Jesus did. Indeed, this was the main thing my friend took away which didn't assist my explanation that good deeds don't play any part in the process of salvation! There was also a clear manipulation of the atmosphere for the altar call despite claims to the contrary in the book.

"They created a wonderful atmosphere in the early stages of each meeting, and that atmosphere helped us to realize fully the joy and love of Christianity."

I don't think whipping up the emotions and stirring people to an on the spot decision that they haven't really thought through is ever helpful. It encourages false converts. The Gospel is primarily a rescue plan and involves repentance and faith. Joy and love are necessary by-products, but there needs to be a clear understanding and a counting the cost of following Jesus. It will be hard going!

I appreciate Billy Graham's heart and motivations. I'm grateful for the many souls that have been saved through his ministry and crusades. I'm not sure I approve of the methods or the mass conversion techniques employed. Billy himself realised the importance of follow-up by local churches:

"Melbourne, and Sydney even more, proved how effective a crusade can be when integrated fully into the continuing work of the churches. Whereas in New York, a year after the 1957 crusade, less than half the inquirers were found to have been contacted, the Australian churches shepherded their converts by every means available, and saw the majority become strong in the faith."

I'm sure there are better biographies about Billy Graham than this one!

Cws says

92G

Michael says

Very easy to read biography of the life of Billy Graham. Well organized.

Yeary Orion Maple says

Billy Graham did so much.

Billy Graham had a ministry where he did so much and he ministered for so long. Can't believe how old he is. The lord preserved him.

Gerald Thomson says

An unfortunate biography of a fascinating life. Pollock slogs along with details about the numbers at the various crusades in Graham's life. Though this was his work and calling, there has to be more to this life than what is presented. Certainly not a critical analysis of the man. I love biographies, but this one is certainly lacking.

Mark Anderson says

Billy Graham was a man of great faith to be sure, and we all would be wise to emulate him. But in reading this I had to remember that Billy Graham was not the one to be glorified but the one doing the glorifying - for God. A great introduction to a great man of God.

Ivy says

I enjoyed getting to "know" Billy Graham better through this book, but the second half was hard to get through, with laborious details of his many crusades. However, there were just enough personal accounts to keep me reading (and sometimes skimming) to the end. There has got to be a better biography of such a great man.

Amber says

Loved reading the biography of Billy Graham's life. He is a Really inspiring man.

Jeff says

I read the 1969 version of this book. The first half or so of the book had a good mix of personal stories and crusade details. The details of the ministry through the 1960s caused the book to bog down a bit for the last half. Not sure if Pollock works for the BGEA in some capacity, but that can happen when an organizational historian is given the task of writing a biography. I would be interested in reading later editions. Billy Graham is a tremendous role model for ministry and this book shows why.

F says

Somewhat glosses over Graham's unscriptural practices and demonizes the friends that tried to help him see the error of his ways. Otherwise a decent biography.

Cindy says

Wow! This man bathed everything in prayer and I watched TV today and learned he is 99years old and although he is limited by his age and aliments.....still praising the Lord. What a ministry!

Rutendo says

Went half way coz I had to return to the library, but the half I read was worth-it. It is amazing how God works in people's lives. Glory unto God always.
