

# Ordinary People, Extraordinary Things

How God Brings Revival

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# **PART V: THE MOST RECENT AWAKENING**

## CHAPTER 11: EVENTS LEADING TO THE FOURTH AWAKENING

It would be wonderful to report that with the beginning of Pentecostalism and the ministry of Billy Sunday, we became the Christian nation we have always professed to be. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Once again, there was decline in spirituality, and once again God responded with what is sometimes referred to as “The Fourth Great Awakening.” After World War II there was an increased sensitivity to and interest in spiritual things. Many people in the country turned to God, and the growth rate of the churches increased. Billy Graham is the figure that was produced by this awakening to continue the tradition of revivalism leadership. In this chapter we will briefly look at the history between the end of the third period of awakening, figured by historians as the end of World War I, and the opening up of the fourth, which roughly coincided with the last stages of World War II.

### **The Twenties**

The period from the signing of the Armistice in Europe to the Stock Market crash of 1929 made this decade one of the most clearly defined in our history. During this time there were several events that affected the spiritual health of the nation.

1. We became an urban nation. For the first time a majority of Americans lived in cities with a population of over 2,500. According to the census of 1920, 51.4% lived in urban rather than agricultural areas. As we’ve noted in previous chapters, the church did not adjust to this movement to the cities on the whole, preferring instead to maintain an agriculturally based strategy in planning for ministry, and gradually moving out of the cities.
2. The standard of living rapidly rose during this period. As many labor laws were enacted limiting the number of hours people could work, and agreements were made with labor and management, leisure time was created. Play time became the right of all, rather than the privilege of just a few. Many aspects of our society were created during this time in order to fill the needs of people to be involved in play: movies began to be popular; the radio provided connection to areas other than the immediate neighborhood; and national figures were created in the entertainment industry--people like Babe Ruth, Lowell Thomas, Rudolph Valentino, Charlie Chaplin, and Charles Lindberg became national heroes. The automobile became a commonplace possession, with people doing more travel. Vacations became a way of life. In short, this period became known as the “Roaring Twenties” with

the emphasis on fun, finance, and progress.

- 3 There was controversy in the church. Another aspect of the church's problems during this decade was the fact that many of the theological disagreements mentioned earlier between science and theology became exacerbated. Perhaps the culmination of the controversy between fundamentalists and the scientific community came in July of 1925. The event that became known as "The Scopes' Trial" took place in Dayton, Tennessee. John Scopes, a teacher, was under indictment for teaching evolution to his students. The State of Tennessee had passed a law, sponsored by George Washington Butler of the State legislature, that became known as "An Act prohibiting the teaching of the Evolution Theory in all the Universities, Normals, and all other public schools of Tennessee." John Scopes, recent college graduate in his first year of teaching, transgressed the law and was brought to trial. The famous trial lawyer Clarence Darrow agreed to defend him. William Jennings Bryant, another nationally famous figure, was engaged on behalf of the conservative religious faction that had supported the law. During six days over two million words were given to reporting this trial in the nation's newspapers. But in reality, it became something of a national joke.

The unwillingness of the fundamentalists to include the scientific advances in their system of belief alienated other religious leaders. Liberals, led by Harry Emerson Fosdick, preacher in Riverside Church in New York, began to criticize the fundamentalists. Fosdick, at that time, was the most influential minister in the country due to his publishing and radio ministry. He used those forums to write and speak against anything that smacked of fundamentalism.

Thus this decade was a time of thriving economy, rampant disregard for many of the traditional values and themes of Christianity, and one of controversy within the church. Sydney Ahlstrom, in summarizing the effect that these things had on religion, referred to "The American Religious Depression" of 1925-1935.<sup>(1)</sup> Church attendance declined throughout the country; far fewer people volunteered for mission work; and income for missions fell off sharply in spite of the booming prosperity of the country. It was a time when prosperity once again seemed to have a negative effect on the spiritual life and health of the country.

## The Thirties

Anyone who lived through these years will share stories of deprivation during "The Depression." The Stock Market Crash of 1929 shocked a nation that believed that there would be a continued progress in life. Many people refused to believe that the depression would last, thinking that it was like previous "adjustments" in the economy, lasting a year or so. But this time the economy continued to slide. The national income plummeted. In 1929 income nationwide was 83 billion dollars. In 1932 it was 40 billion dollars. Unemployment soared to 15 million in early 1933. Bread and soup lines became a normative experience in the cities, and people selling apples on corners or needles door-to-door to get a little extra money were common. A sense of desperation filled the country. The dustbowls of the Midwest farm areas added to the despair that left the entire country questioning the future.

Unlike the experience of 1857, when an economic decline precipitated an openness to prayer, this experience of economic depression did not contribute to a nationwide revival. This is not to say that faith was everywhere on the decline, however. While researching this period I spoke to some people with vivid memories of this time. They told of the fear and dread that enveloped families at the time that house payments could no longer be made, and the repossessioner came. They spoke of the father in the family having to move out of state to work, because that was the

only work available. There was the story of one girl who worked as maid, laundress, cook and cared for children--all for fifty cents per week. Yet, many churches continued to grow, and the faith of many remained strong in spite of the pressures being exerted against a belief in a loving, caring, providing God. However, those who did not enter the decade with a firm faith did not, as a general rule, come to the churches in huge numbers during this decade. To quote Sydney Ahlstrom again,

Adding greatly to the uneasiness of churchgoing Americans of all classes was the continued advance of those changes in manners and mores that had made the 1920s a nightmare for rural America. Despite the Depression, urban civilization continued to make its conquests. Jazz, dancing, feminism, and the Hollywood star system mocked the older moral standards, both Catholic and Protestant. Hard times notwithstanding, the automobile continued to transform traditional modes of living and loving. Sabbath-keeping was losing ground.(2)

During this decade there was also theological controversy with the beginning of what became known as Neo-Orthodoxy. This theological system began in Germany with the goal of combining traditional Christian doctrine with the social gospel and the liberal wing of the church. However, as an apparent cross between the fundamentalist belief in a need to respect Scripture and a liberal tendency to cut itself off from an inerrant Scripture, this system of Karl Barth and Richard and Reinholdt Niebuhr was attacked by both. Those committed to religious conservatism were especially vehement in their condemnation of what they interpreted as a carefully disguised form of modernism.

## **The War Years**

On December 7, 1941, there came the “day that will live in infamy.” The United States had prided itself as a nation of peace-loving people, and President Roosevelt had pledged to keep us out of war. However, when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, all of that changed. The nation went to war. These years, too, had an effect on the spiritual lethargy that the nation had fallen into during the twenties and thirties, for several reasons. First of all, it became clear, as the country developed war fever, that the moral influence of the churches had declined considerably since 1916 and the beginning of our involvement in World War I. During that First World War, the church had been instrumental in supporting the war. Billy Sunday had been a major instrument of recruitment for men to sign up for the army, and ministers in the pulpit were the primary mass media. Now, however, with radio and a growing television market, with newspapers available in every city, and with the division in the church world, the church was not looked to as the guiding moral light that it had been during the earlier conflict. Secondly, despite the facts mentioned earlier, there was a return to spiritual thinking.

People were looking for meaning in events that were beyond understanding, and this search intensified as the price of war increased. It is said that “there are no atheists in foxholes.” This was largely true for the soldiers in Europe, but it was also true on the home front as thousands of homes had blue and gold stars hanging in their windows, testifying to the sacrifices that they were making for the sake of the war. Thirdly, and closely related to the events mentioned above, the end of the war saw forces unleashed that called peoples’ attention to things eternal. The atomic bomb had brought Japan to its knees, but the rest of the world took notice as well. Such awesome and overwhelming power put a fear into the heart, especially as the Cold War developed and bomb shelters were built out of fear of attack by the Russians. These kinds of forces at work made people stop and think about the eternal values, and began to turn to the Lord. Fourthly, there was an economic change in the country that somehow made people turn in thanksgiving to God. After ten plus years of depression and four years of war, there was a renewed affluence. Work was

available in a post-war, expanding economy. Paychecks could now purchase those goods that were not obtainable before. This time, affluence after struggle caused people to thank God for

|      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1910 |       |
| 1920 | 43%   |
| 1930 | 47%   |
| 1940 | 49%   |
| 1950 | 55%   |
| 1956 | 62%   |
| 1960 | 69%   |
| 1970 | 62.4% |

deliverance and provision. Fifthly, there was a vast people-movement that occurred during the post-war years. In the census of 1950 we find that two-thirds of the population of the United States lived in the cities. Previously, those thronging into the metropolitan areas of the country were largely immigrants. Back in the twenties there had been the development of immigration quotas as a means to control the influx of foreigners, so after World War II it was not the Europeans who were filling the tenements.

The people moving into the cities during this period were coming from the country. Farm workers who were unneeded due to the increasing mechanization of agriculture made their way to the industrial centers of the country to find work.

Modern Church Growth research has found that people are more open to the message of the gospel during times when such people movements occur. This period was no exception as church organizations began to see the vast potential of mission enterprise at home. Sixthly, there was the Cold War. Newsweek magazine of May 1, 1950, is devoted to a report on the Cold War and Joseph McCarthy's search for communists in government, in the arts, and in education. It reports a fear that was sweeping the country and leading many to reaffirm being an American. One way to affirm the American way of life was to be a church member. Church membership was a denial of the atheistic stance of communism.

Declining morals in the country caused a deep concern. Women had taken jobs in the war industry during the war years, and this had opened up new opportunities for unfaithfulness. It also caused a dislocation of families, with the beginning of the breakdown of the traditional view of father at work, mother at home with children.

Juvenile delinquency also increased during the decades of depression and war, as children felt the dislocation of families and experienced poverty.

## Resulting Revival

This is the background for an upsurge in religious interest. Newspapers, popular magazines and books of that time analyzed the resurgence of piety. People were going back to church and back to the synagogue. In fact, in 1957, when the Census Bureau asked people the question, "What is your religion?" ninety-six percent of Americans responded by listing a particular church or synagogue. The table below shows the percentage of people who affiliated with the church in the twentieth century.

The church was once again alive and well, and having an impact on the society of America. It was during the decade of the fifties that "In God We Trust" was officially adopted by Congress as the theme on our coinage (1956). This had been an unofficial motto since 1865, but now it was to become the country's first official statement of faith. It was also during this decade that the phrase, "One nation, under God," was added to our national Pledge of Allegiance (1954).

## Major Figure

This period of revival produced a renewed interest in revivalism. In the *Newsweek* issue mentioned earlier, there is also a report on the main character of the revivalism that flourished anew: Billy Graham. *Newsweek* reported: “Billy Graham is sure that a great revival is sweeping the United States. He believes that he is only part of it. ‘My feeling as a worker in the vineyard is that there is a great upsurge of faith in the country which seeks a way back to Christ.’”(3)

Revivalism was something new for many churches. After 1930 it had almost died out as a means of reaching people for Christ, replaced by “Home Visitation” as the preferred technique. Now, however, with the sense that there was a renewal going on, revivalists returned to the forefront, and none was more notable than Billy Graham. In our next chapter we consider the life and ministry of this latest tool in God’s hands.

### Notes:

1. Sydney Ahlstrom, p. 899.
2. Ibid, p. 924.
3. *Newsweek* (May 1, 1960), p. 67.

## CHAPTER 12: BILLY GRAHAM

Convinced that prayer was the way to begin a revival, businessmen in Charlotte, North Carolina came to Frank Graham with a request to use his pasture for a prayer meeting. The time was May, 1934, in the midst of an economic depression that was accompanied by a spiritual apathy. About thirty men gathered for a day of prayer, and their leader, a man named Vernon Patterson, prayed that “out of Charlotte the Lord would raise up someone to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth.”<sup>(1)</sup> Later that year, the businessmen raised the needed funds to build a pine tabernacle for an 11-week revival campaign, to be led by an evangelist by the name of Mordecai Ham. It was during the meetings that took place during that crusade that God began the answer to Patterson’s prayer, for Billy Frank Graham, a young man of 16 years old at the time, came forward and dedicated his life to the Lord. His name would become synonymous with crusade evangelism, and he himself would become a world-wide ambassador for the Lord.

### Early Life

William Franklin Graham, Jr. was born November 7, 1918. Weekdays were spent on the family dairy farm early in his life. Sundays were spent attending the Associate Reformed Church. This denomination was characterized by an extremely conservative worship service where only the Psalms were sung. Biographies about Graham indicate that early in life he was far more interested in baseball than school. He even harbored, as do many young boys, hopes of becoming a professional baseball player. He reported that one of the highlights of his youth came when he was ten years old and got to shake Babe Ruth’s hand.

When Bill was about fifteen, there was a series of incidents that would change the direction of his life. First of all, in 1933 his mother joined a Bible class, invited by her sister. The sister, Lil Barker, had discovered “that the Lord has come in and lives in our hearts. I had never known that truth before.”<sup>(2)</sup> So Billy’s mother became interested in spiritual things. His father, however, was focusing his energies more on rebuilding the family’s economic situation after the local bank failure had wiped out all monetary reserve.

Three weeks after Mrs. Graham began attending the Bible class, however, another event occurred that shook the family. Frank Graham was working with a mechanical saw when a piece of wood flew off it and struck him in the head. The doctor was called, and the verdict given that he would probably die. Billy’s mother called people, asking them to pray. She herself went upstairs to intercede for her husband and to petition for his life. She stayed there until she felt a confidence that her husband would indeed recover. This event led to a mild spiritual awakening for the family, as both parents felt that God had spoken to them about their need to spend more



time in spiritual pursuits. Morrow Graham began to read devotional writings to her children, though Billy thought them ridiculous. He preferred racing around the country with other young men in the family car, which he would “borrow.”

The third event, of course, was the visit of Mordecai Ham. This revival was to last eleven weeks. By all reports, it made quite an impact on the city of Charlotte. None of the Grahams attended the first week. Billy was especially antagonistic to the idea of a hellfire-and-brimstone preacher. However, Billy was encouraged to come by the sons of a local sharecropper when they knew that Ham had accused the local high school students of fornication. The students at Central High School were furious, and marched on the tabernacle in protest. The local newspapers carried accounts of the event, and Billy’s interest was piqued. Once at the meeting, he said, “All my father’s mules and horses could not have kept me away from the meeting.” His attendance began to produce an anxiety in young Graham, however. He “came under conviction.” For several days he felt uncomfortable, knowing that Christ died on the cross for his sins, knowing that Jesus was alive and wanted a relationship with Billy Graham. Yet, Billy was uncomfortable knowing that if he made a commitment to God, it would have to be a total commitment, one where he gave up control of his life. The struggle continued throughout the one evening of the revival until the choir sang, “Almost Persuaded, Christ to Believe.” This song put the danger of Billy’s hesitation in perspective and gave him the courage to go forward. Down the aisle he went and prayed with a local tailor who was volunteering as one of the counselors that evening.

## **Bible School**

At this point, however, Billy still did not feel called to become a preacher. He admired friends like Grady Wilson. Grady had gone forward at the same time as Billy and in a short time was preaching at the local mission. Billy thought himself too nervous and shy to do anything like that, and was incredibly nervous when he would “testify.” He had no idea what the future held for him as far as a profession was concerned, and probably was thinking that he would yet be a dairy farmer in Charlotte.

After graduation from high school in 1936, Billy went to work selling Fuller brushes. He was an effective salesman, and the supervisor of his area said that he was the best salesman he had. That fall he entered, at the urging of his mother, Bob Jones College in Cleveland, Tennessee. After only one semester, he transferred to the Florida Bible Institute in Tampa. It was while he was a student in this institution that he made a decision for the ministry. The decision was the culmination, once again, of a series of events in his life. First of all, he heard of the moral failings of two Christians whom he had admired and learned from. This shook him with the knowledge that such things could happen, and could happen to him if he wasn’t totally committed to the Lord. The second event was a broken engagement. He had fallen in love with a student who was one year ahead of him in the school, Emily Regina Cavanaugh. In the summer of 1937 he wrote to her at her home in Toronto, asking her to marry him. She was not able to give him a definite answer until February of 1938. While out for ice cream cones, Emily agreed to his proposal, and Billy began to look forward to a future that included marriage and family. As he thought about the future, the possibility of being a preacher began to look more and more attractive to him. His fear was that he wouldn’t be any good at it. The authorized biography of Graham put his struggle this way:

In the night walks alone he tussled with excuses. His indifferent background would indeed keep him a mediocre preacher “somewhere out in the sticks.” Yet any sacrifice appeared trivial beside Christ’s sufferings or the world’s needs. As for eloquence, the Lord had told Moses, “Go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.” Billy hesitated because for him

the call was absolute. If he accepted, he must henceforth have no other ambition, no other occupation but the proclaiming of God's message, everywhere, to everybody, always...Once the call was accepted, half measures would be impossible. One night in March 1938 Billy Graham returned from his walk and reached the eighteenth green (the college was on the grounds of a former golf course) immediately before the school's front door. "The trees were loaded with Spanish moss, and in the moonlight it was like a fairyland." He sat down on the edge of the green, looking up at the moon and stars, aware of a warm breeze from the south. The tension snapped. "I remember getting on my knees and saying, 'O God, if you want me to preach, I will do it.' Tears streamed down my cheeks as I made this great surrender to become an ambassador for Jesus Christ."(3)

From that point on, Billy began to plan for a preaching career. Unfortunately, things did not work out so well with Emily. In May she told him that she was having second thoughts. She felt that she loved another man, a senior about to graduate, more than she loved Billy. At a party she told him that she had decided to marry Charles Massey. Billy and Emily remained friends, and later Billy even attended the wedding.

In his disappointment about the failure of this relationship, he dedicated himself to his new passion, preaching. He preached wherever there was an opening, and if there was none, he would preach in the street. He also gained some first-hand experience in giving an altar call, a skill for which he was to become famous. Later in his life he said that he experienced the power of God in a special way when he was inviting people to come forward and commit their lives to the Lord.

Graduation from Florida Bible Institute came in 1940 for young Graham. At the commencement ceremony the valedictorian of the class, Vera Rescue, spoke of the need for a revival in the nation. She reviewed, in her speech, the way God has acted in the history of the church in America noting that God regularly used, a chosen human instrument to shine forth His light in the darkness. Men like Luther, John and Charles Wesley, Moody and others who were ordinary men, but men who heard the voice of God...It has been said that Luther revolutionized the world. It was not he but Christ working through him. The time is ripe for another Luther, Wesley, Moody. There is room for another name in this list.(4)

Even though the man referred to was sitting among the graduates that day, he still had no inkling of what his future was going to be.

Knowing now that he intended to enter the ministry, Graham felt that he needed more education. Accordingly, he enrolled in Wheaton college. Because Bob Jones College and the Florida Bible Institute were not accredited institutions, he entered as a sophomore in September of 1940.

## **Wheaton College Years**

There were a couple of incidents during his years at this institution that were to shape his future. First of all, he met the woman who would be his wife, Ruth Bell. Ruth was the daughter of missionaries and intended to serve as a missionary in China. This appeared to be a conflict of vocation, since Billy intended to become a minister at home. However, after their engagement in the summer of 1941, Ruth agreed that she would follow Billy wherever he felt God led him. Another incident that shaped Billy Graham was his appointment as the preaching pastor for the United Gospel Tabernacle in Wheaton. This experience gave him a taste for ministry and especially for preaching, though it sometimes made him so exhausted that he would fall asleep during Monday morning classes.

After Wheaton, Billy decided to enter the army as a chaplain. The army, however, told him that he would need a year in a pastorate or a year in seminary before they would consider him for

a chaplaincy. Therefore, he accepted a position as pastor of Village Church, Western Springs, Illinois. He was paid \$45 per week. Once he had begun his work there, Billy felt free to marry. A trip to Montreat, North Carolina, home of Ruth's parents, was arranged, and they were married on August 13, 1943.

## **To Chicago**

During that first year of marriage and pastoring there was another turning point in Billy's career. In October he received a telephone call from Torrey Johnson. Johnson experienced stress as he tried to fulfill three roles: pastor of a thriving church, professor of New Testament Greek at Northern Baptist Seminary, and serving as host of a weekly radio program called, "Songs in the Night." The radio program consisted of forty-five minutes of singing and preaching from 10:15 p.m. to 11:00 on Sunday nights. Johnson suggested that the Village Church take over sponsoring the program, with Billy Graham as host and preacher. The cost would be \$100 per week, a significant investment for a church that had a total weekly pledge of \$86.50 per week at the time. But the congregation raised the money needed for an initial five broadcasts. Billy enlisted the vocal abilities of George Beverly Shea for the beginning programs. After those five, the program became self-supporting as Chicago listeners were enthusiastic about the young man from North Carolina and sent in their financial support.

Another turning point came in the spring of 1944, and this one also came through Torrey Johnson. Johnson had a burden for the many servicemen who were coming through Chicago, and wanted to offer an alternative to the bars and brothels of the city. Therefore, he decided to organize a Saturday evening, "Youth For Christ" rally. He booked Orchestra Hall, with three thousand seats. Most people thought this ridiculous since many evangelists had had dismal results in the city of Chicago, and there had not been that kind of crowd for a religious event since the days of Billy Sunday. Billy Graham was chosen as speaker for the meeting. An estimated 2800 people showed up, and 42 came forward at the invitation. Thus began the practice, from city to city, of the Youth for Christ rallies that became the primary vehicle for expanding the reputation of Billy Graham.

## **Youth For Christ**

In October of 1944 Billy accepted a commission into the army as a second lieutenant, with orders to report to Harvard Divinity School for training as a chaplain. While preparing to report, Billy came down with mumps. He was sick in bed for six weeks, and afterwards needed convalescence. A radio listener sent \$100 for him to go to Florida. While in Florida recuperating, Torrey Johnson visited Billy and described a vision for Saturday night rallies throughout the country and Canada. Since convalescing officers were confined to desk jobs, Torrey argued, Billy should resign his commission and become the first organizer and evangelist for Youth for Christ. Billy agreed, and his career as a full-time evangelist was begun.

With a motto of "Geared to the Times, Anchored to the Rock," Youth for Christ came at a crucial time in the history of our country. Denominational leaders in conservative churches were concerned that the great doctrines of the church were no longer held in honor. And yet, there was concern, too, that there had to be a contemporary explanation of those doctrines that would capture the hearts and minds of America's youth. This is what the organization set out to do, not only in the United States, but also in Europe. Supported by the National Association of Evangelicals, the ministry rapidly grew, and Billy Graham's life was filled with the details of running an expanding organization and preaching regularly.

The revival service that catapulted Billy Graham into national fame came in 1949. There had been many successful crusades prior to this time, but news was still little focused on religious matters, and so, few had heard of the evangelist of Youth For Christ. That was about to change.

### **Crisis Over the Bible**

Prior to the crusade in Los Angeles, however, there was a crisis that deeply affected the ministry of Billy Graham. Billy was struggling with the issue of the inspiration of Scripture. A good friend had begun studying with liberal theologians, and encouraged Billy to become more modern in his presentation and beliefs. Charles Templeton, the friend, was reported to have said, "Poor Billy. If he goes on the way he's going he'll never do anything for God. He'll be circumscribed to a small little narrow interpretation of the Bible, and his ministry will be curtailed. As for me, I'm taking a different road." (5)

Templeton claimed that this was an erroneous report of his words, but they were what Billy heard. The result was a crisis of faith for the young evangelist. Would he believe God had spoken in the Bible and preach it that way, or would he look for the newer way? That evening, after talking with Templeton, Billy Graham spent time by himself reading the Bible. He noticed especially how often the prophets said, "Thus saith the Lord,." He reviewed how Jesus treated the Old Testament as the Word of God. He read again the Bible passages that affirmed the Bible's own claim to inspiration. After reading these many passages, he went out into the woods around Forest Home retreat center in Southern California, and prayed for wisdom. He described the resolution of this dilemma this way:

So I went back and I got my Bible, and I went out in the moonlight. And I got to a stump and put the Bible on the stump, and I knelt down, and I said, "Oh, God, I cannot prove certain things. I cannot answer some of the questions Chuck is raising and some of the other people are raising, but I accept this Book by faith as the Word of God." (6)

Today a stone tablet marks the spot where he prayed this prayer. It was with this renewed conviction and confidence in the Word that Billy planned his future preaching.

### **The Los Angeles Campaign**

The first revival campaign that was planned after the Forest Home decision was in Los Angeles. This campaign was to catapult Billy Graham into national prominence. The campaign started, as do all of Billy Graham's crusades, with prayer. The advance team, led by Grady Wilson, organized prayer groups in churches, ministers' prayer times, prayer chains, and prayer vigils. A three-week crusade was planned in a tent on the outskirts of downtown Los Angeles. At the end of three weeks, organizers encouraged an extension of the campaign. Graham, up to that time, had never extended a campaign, but was in prayer about it when the conversion of Stuart Hamblin changed the course of events. Hamblin, a former Texas cowboy, was a legend in Los Angeles. He had a daily radio program in which he sang his own songs and talked. At the urging of his wife, Hamblin attended one of Graham's meetings, with the result that he invited Graham to be interviewed on his radio program. A live interview was held, at the end of which Hamblin encouraged his listeners to go to the tent. In a statement that was a surprise even to him, Hamblin ended by interview by saying, "I'll be there too." He went faithfully, but became angry at Graham, thinking that he was speaking directly to him about the need for a change in his life. In anger, toward the end of the three weeks, he decided to go out and get drunk. He went from bar to bar, consuming the drinks that had formerly given him some relief from the stress and strain of his life. This time, however, he found no peace in the alcohol. Finally, he went home troubled, woke

his wife, and together they prayed. About 2 a.m. they called Billy Graham, who immediately went to the Hamblin home to meet with them. Some three hours later, Stuart Hamblin quit fighting the call of the Holy Spirit and became a believer.

When Hamblin announced his decision to his radio audience, reporters were at the next Billy Graham meeting, along with hundreds of other new people. When a local well-known gangster, Jim Vaus, was converted, people began to take even more notice. Hundreds began to stream forward at the end of meetings in which the new converts shared their testimonies. *Time* and *Newsweek* carried stories about the new evangelist. And the crusade was extended for eight weeks.

After Los Angeles there was Boston. Again the response was tremendous. Colombia, South Carolina, followed, and the rest of the story is well-known. Billy Graham has become an ambassador for God to the world, a confidant of presidents and kings, and a preacher who still feels the power of God come upon him when he gives an invitation.

### Contributions

Billy Graham will be remembered for many things related to revivalism, but probably most of all he will be remembered for:

1. The extraordinary response to his invitations;
2. Bringing revival services to radio and television;
3. His integrity in a day and age when other television religious figures have experienced a moral falling;
4. Extending the revivalism of Finney, Moody and Sunday into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Part of the success of Graham in these areas is attributed to a failed campaign in Modesto, California. After leading meetings that bore little fruit, the evangelism team of Beverly Shea, Billy Graham, Cliff Barrows and Grady Wilson met to discuss why revivalism had such a bad reputation since Billy Sunday's time. They came up with a list of items that needed correcting:

- sensationalism
- emotionalism
- too great an emphasis on prophecy
- anti-intellectualism
- no follow-up
- an anti-church and anti-clergy bias in the preaching
- too much pay for the evangelist

The team decided to correct as many of these as possible by designing follow-up with the Navigator's material, by putting Billy Graham on a salary rather than depending on a freewill offering to pay his way, by supporting the local church and clergy, and by refining the preaching at the revivals.

These corrections made it possible for revival crusades to flourish in our country during his ministry.

#### Notes:

1. John Pollock, *Billy Graham* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), p. 5.
2. Ibid, p. 4.
3. Ibid, p. 17.
4. bid, p. 24.
5. Ibid, p. 53.
6. Ibid.