

Billy Graham: The Incredible Impact of One Surrendered Life

“Someday you will read or hear that Billy Graham is dead. Don’t you believe a word of it. I shall be more alive than I am now. I will just have changed my address. I will have gone into the presence of God.” –Rev. Billy Graham

I clearly remember my friends wheeling me in to the stadium the first night of the crusade in Portland in 1992.

I was in a wheelchair, having had knee surgery only weeks before; and while I wasn’t able to be a counselor as I’d hoped, I was at least able to sing in the choir.

Each afternoon we’d arrive early and watch the different guest singers do sound checks. I clearly remember George Beverly Shea with Cliff Barrows, Sandi Patty and Johnny and June Cash being there; singers I’d admired for many, many years—and still admire to this day.

There was an air of excitement that grew with each night.

A year beforehand, a team from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association had come to Portland to hold training meetings for those who wanted to volunteer in various aspects of the crusade.

Even at that time, there was a sense that this was going to be something incredibly special. The first night of training so many people volunteered that they ran out of materials and had to have more materials rushed to them.

I also remember that for the crusade they had a remote location where they had set up a jumbotron for those who couldn’t get into the live crusade.

Each night both locations were maxed out, and people were turned away. (VIDEO)

I will never forget the crowds pouring to the altar at the end of each message.

To this day, tears fill my eyes when I remember how many lives were touched that week. One of those lives is my dear friend Jennifer.

Jennifer worked with my sister at Taco Bell.

My sister invited her to the crusade that week, and that is where I met Jennifer for the very first time. She went forward that week to receive Christ and immediately began attending our church.

It was during that time that God touched her life in a way that would impact her forever.

She shares about that impact in a post she wrote for me: "How My Abortion Turned Into a Ministry."

Another incredible memory I have is how God used the Operation Andrew prayer cards in our church.

The idea of the Operation Andrew prayer cards was to list five names of people you wanted to invite to the crusade. These cards were sent to the involved churches months ahead of time, so people could pray over these names well in advance, believing that God would soften people's hearts and prepare them to attend the crusade.

They are the inspiration behind this post I wrote: "What To Do When Someone Won't Listen to the Gospel."

After my father, who was the pastor of our church, presented the Operation Andrew prayer cards to the congregation, one member felt led to do something special with those cards.

After going home that Sunday, he went into his garage and made a clear fiberglass church with a large slot in the roof.

The following Sunday, each person filled out, not one, but two Operation Andrew cards. One card they placed in their Bible; the other card, they slid into the fiberglass church.

Each Sunday, one of the ushers would bring that church to the front of the auditorium, and we'd pray over the names in that box.

Miraculously, well before the crusade, many people whose names were in that Operation Andrew box received Christ, and many more attended the crusade and received Christ that week!

Many things set Billy Graham apart from every other televangelist:

- His loyalty to the simplicity of the gospel
- His unwavering fidelity to the Word of God
- His deep integrity
- The fact that his life was never marked with scandal

God used him to touch lives, from the most obscure to those who were household names. And his message to both was the same.

He will forever be remembered as a man who spoke truth with simplicity and boldness.

Thank you, Billy Graham, for standing boldly for Jesus and being faithful wherever God placed you to minister.

See you at the house.

Enjoy the included video from the Portland 1992 crusade.

Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her Bosnian hero. Together they live with their two active boys, and she enjoys fruity

candles, good coffee and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her best-selling book The Missional Handbook. At A Little R & R she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at Missional Call where she shares her passion for local and global missions. You can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.

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