

Charismatic Leaders Praise Billy Graham's Influence, Legacy

When evangelist Billy Graham died Wednesday morning, Spirit-filled believers were among the first to honor one of the most influential men in modern Christianity.

Here's what they are saying:

Steve Strang, founder and CEO of Charisma Media:

The entire Christian community mourns the passing of the greatest religious figure of the last century. We thank God for his life and influence, which continues through his children and the organizations he founded. He preached that America needs God, and that's true now more than ever.

Alveda King, evangelist, founder of Priests for Life

Dr. Billy Graham has departed earth to receive a warrior's reward. Many will note the many contributions of the life and legacy of Dr. Billy Graham today in honor and recognition of this great Christian warrior, who has reached millions of lives for Christ during his 99 years on earth.

As a fledgling freelance journalist in the 20th century, I interviewed Dr. Graham, who was in Atlanta to conduct a crusade. As he spoke, he admonished me to "pray without ceasing." As he spoke, his brilliant blue eyes glowed with a heavenly brightness. As I naively asked how anyone could pray 24/7; he quietly responded in a reverberating voice, "I'm praying for you right now." This unforgettable experience changed my life forever.

The lives of my family have been personally intertwined with

those of Dr. Graham and his family throughout our lifetime. My "Uncle ML," Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., ministered with Dr. Billy in New York at Madison Square Gardens during the 1950s. Together, in living color, bridging the racial divide, they debunked the colorblind myth; revealing the mystery of Acts 16:26: one blood, one human race. The photo is printed with permission in my book, King Truths.

My friend Victoria Hearst, founder of Praise Him Ministries and granddaughter of legendary newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst, has shared with me her grandfather's role in bringing Dr. Graham's ministry to the forefront in the media.

One prayer warrior, known as Mrs. Edwards, felt a supernatural compulsion to call media mogul Hearst and tell him about Billy Graham. Hearst was so impressed that he ordered his massive press machine to "puff up" the then-young Christian evangelist Billy Graham. The rest is now history.

Today, I join America and the world in prayers for the Graham family; not just mourning their loss, as Dr. Graham will be sorely missed; but also celebrating the life of this precious man of God.

Michael Brown, author and social commentator:

The loss of this great man of God reminds us of the role he played in the last generation. How we need more leaders like him, known for preaching Jesus, known for personal integrity and respected by the nation. What an amazing man, and what an incredible legacy. He leaves a great void with his passing.

Lee Grady, author and social commentator:

WE HONOR THIS MAN who so simply explained the message of the gospel to millions in his lifetime. Thank God we still have his books and recordings. His impact will last far beyond his fruitful 99 years. I'll never forget going to a Billy Graham

crusade in Montgomery, Alabama, when I was a boy. My grandfather made a profession of faith in that meeting.

Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Council:

Today, the most influential evangelist in modern history @BillyGraham stepped into the corridors of eternity.

He preached the gospel, lived with integrity and changed the world. Thank you for the example.

My condolences to the family. #BillyGraham

– Samuel Rodriguez (@nhclc) Feb, 21, 2018

Joyce Meyer, founder Joyce Meyer Ministries:

While it was sad to hear the news of Billy Graham passing, I am rejoicing that he is now home in heaven. Billy was a great man of God who made a tremendous impact all over the globe. His love for people and integrity had a great impact on my life and so many others!

– Joyce Meyer (@JoyceMeyer) Feb. 21, 2018

Steven Furtick, pastor of Elevation Church:

Larry Tomczak, author and social commentator:

When I came to faith in Jesus Christ during the Jesus Movement in the late '60s, there was one Christian leader to whom I looked and continued to look for four and a half decades, Billy Graham. He was the man of God I emulated and imitated and learned from like no other. My study has so many of his books, and our living room coffee table has a giant book that is a tribute to him and remains there till this day.

I was honored to have a divine appointment with Billy Graham in the lobby of the Sheraton Hotel, and I asked him if he had any counsel for me and the 2000 young people we were reaching in the D.C area every week. He took his Bible from under his arm, pointed to it, and with his piercing blue eyes, looked at me and smiled saying, "Stay in the book. Stay in the book!" As we all pay tribute to him and remember him, may we all do that as we pray for another Great Awakening that he longed for with us.

Joel Osteen, pastor of Lakewood Church:

Billy Graham has always been and will always be a hero in our home. Next to my own father, Reverend Graham was the most humble and gracious man I ever knew. I am honored to call him a friend and a mentor. Victoria and I will miss him dearly.

– Joel Osteen (@JoelOsteen) Feb. 21, 2018

Tony Evans, pastor, author and speaker

Honoring one of the greatest evangelists of all time as he passed into Glory today. Welcome home, my friend. #BillyGraham

– Tony Evans (@drtonyevans) Feb. 21, 2018

Benny Hinn, evangelist:

Even as we grieve Dr. Graham's passing from this earth, we rejoice at his homegoing. My staff and family are praying for GiGi, Anne, Ruth, Franklin and Ned, as well as every other member of the Graham family and Billy Graham Evangelistic Association staff.

We know that Psalm 37:23 declares that a person's steps are

'ordered by the Lord.' Certainly, this was true of each step of his well-spent 99 years. He was a giant in so many ways, not just in stature, and in him many generations saw firsthand a model of integrity, godliness, love and an unmistakable passion for lost souls. There is no greater example of crusade evangelism. And he was a trailblazer in so many other areas—television, motion pictures, bestselling inspirational retreats, bestselling books. Imagine the reception and rejoicing in heaven among the vast multitudes who were born again because of Dr. Graham's faithfulness to his calling and to the cause of Christ!

Dr. Billy Graham was the first man who truly affected my life as a Christian. I remember watching his crusades and television specials as a teenager in Canada and how profoundly both I and my family were touched. His impact cannot be measured. Among my family photos in my bedroom right now is an album that features his life. It's the only picture album of anyone other than my family.

I have loved and honored both Dr. Graham and his family for so many years. Franklin has always taken such a strong stand for the Lord, and I've admired his life. When Franklin prayed with me years ago, it was he that encouraged me to focus on evangelism. After that prayer, he told me, "If you focus on souls, God will focus on you!"

As a result of Franklin's words and his influence, in every crusade I've held, I've led an altar call for precious souls to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

We will miss his influence on our lives and enormous presence. Only time will measure the impact on the world's leaders and on the world itself. No one remains that has that kind of impact.

Years ago, God distinctly told me that when Oral Roberts, Rex Humbard and Billy Graham all went to be with the Lord, their

passing would usher in one of the greatest days of revival in our lifetime!

I will never forget the words he spoke when his beloved Ruth was laid to rest in the Prayer Garden at the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte: "I am looking forward to the day when we'll have the next service here," referring to the time when he would be at home in heaven with her.

That time has come today, and while I join his loved ones and believers around the globe in mourning the loss of this great trailblazer of the faith, we also celebrate that reunion in heaven with his precious wife, parents, family, friends, all those who are there as a result of his ministry and especially with the Lord Jesus, whom our remarkable brother in Christ served so faithfully during his memorable lifetime!

Jentezen Franklin, pastor of Free Chapel:

I can't possibly think of an individual more committed to preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ than Billy Graham. He led millions to the foot of the cross with a tender voice faithfully relaying a message of hope. His ministry has reached far and wide, across hundreds of nations.

Upon hearing him preach for the first time one could immediately realize how dearly this man loved Jesus and wanted others to experience that same love—it overflowed from the very depths of his heart. His passion and commitment to sharing the love of Jesus all around the world was instrumental in my own life, inspiring me as I began my ministry.

Despite all of his remarkable accomplishments, he remained an incredibly humble man, always giving credit to his Savior, Jesus Christ. He was a devoted husband and father, a man of upstanding character, living a life of tremendous integrity in every respect.

If I was ever confident that someone would enter the gates of heaven and hear the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," it would be today. We will miss him dearly, but he is surely heaven's gain. My prayers are with all of the members of the Graham family as they grieve the passing of this faithful servant.

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