

Luis Palau, 'Billy Graham of Latin America,' Dead at 86

Internationally known evangelist Luis Palau died today at his home in Portland, Oregon, after a three-year battle with stage 4 lung cancer, his family reports. He was 86.

His son Kevin posted the notice of his father's death on the evangelist's Facebook page, noting that "We are heartbroken, but full of faith. We serve a good God who loves us tremendously. And Dad gave his life to share that Good News with the world."

After a three-year battle with lung cancer, Dad passed away today at his home in Portland, Oregon. He was surrounded by...

Posted by Luis Palau on Thursday, March 11, 2021

Palau, an immigrant from Argentina, was often called the "Billy Graham of Latin America," sharing the gospel in more than 80 nations across the globe. For more than 60 years, his Palau Association has shared the Good News of Jesus Christ with more than 1 billion people throughout the world, per its website, where his official obituary includes the following:

Standing strong for issues of faith and the importance of a vibrant, healthy spiritual life according to the teachings of the Bible, Palau was well regarded by leaders around the globe, including presidents, nobility, business leaders, and church clergy.

Originally from Argentina, Palau was born on November 27, 1934, in Ingeniero Maschwitz, a small town outside Argentina's capital of Buenos Aires. He became a follower of Jesus Christ at the age of 12, just two years after his father's untimely death. Palau began preaching on street

corners as a teenager and hosting his own Christian radio program by the age of 19. He was invited to the United States in 1960 by Ray Stedman, a pastor and missionary leader from Palo Alto, California, who met Palau while in Argentina and began mentoring him shortly thereafter. While studying at Multnomah School of the Bible (now Multnomah University) in Portland, Oregon, Luis met his wife, Patricia Scofield, and together they embarked on a life of missions – first going to Latin America and eventually to more than 80 nations around the world.

Palau became a U.S. citizen in 1962, the same year he served as a Spanish interpreter for Billy Graham during his evangelistic crusade in Fresno, California. By 1966, he spoke to 20,000 people at the Presidential Plaza in Bogota, Columbia, on the opening day of his first mass evangelistic crusade, and from that point in, his ministry only expanded, with a special emphasis on the Spanish-speaking world. He held his first European crusade in Seville, Spain, in 1973, and in 1978, his ministry incorporated as an independent organization. He was one of the first foreign preachers to minister within the old Soviet Union in the '70s and '80s, becoming one of the first to hold an open-air crusade in the area after the Iron Curtain fell.

His official obituary continues:

In addition to citywide evangelistic festivals, Palau's worldwide ministry has grown to include three international daily radio programs in both Spanish and English, reaching more than 48 nations; a Global Network of Evangelists, inspiring and encouraging thousands of evangelists around the world; a City Gospel Movements effort, focused on training and equipping city leaders to better engage with their community; extensive television outreaches; and a digital evangelism effort which reaches millions of individuals each year through social media.

Through all these efforts, Palau and his team have partnered with tens of thousands of churches to lead millions of individuals in decisions to follow Jesus Christ.

Palau was also an accomplished author who published dozens of books throughout his lifetime, including his most popular booklet, *What Is a Real Christian?*, distributed in more than 60 nations. Some of his other well-known titles include *God is Relevant*, *¿Con quién me casaré? (Whom Shall I Marry?)*, *Where is God When Bad Things Happen?* and *Say Yes!*, which have all been translated into multiple languages and distributed to hundreds of thousands worldwide.

Palau leaves behind his wife, Patricia, and four sons, who have carried on the operations of his ministry and extend his legacy. Kevin Palau serves as the ministry's president and CEO; Keith serves on the development team; Andrew is a well-respected evangelist in his own right; and Kevin is an elementary schoolteacher. Palau is also survived by his three daughters-in-law, five sisters, one brother and 12 grandchildren.

Faith leaders and ministries across the globe were quick to share their condolences and memories of Palau via social media. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association noted that Palau "preached to an estimated 30 million people in 75 countries."

Today, a longtime friend of the Graham family and tireless witness for Christ passed away. In his 86 years of life, @LuisPalauLive preached to an estimated 30 million people in 75 countries.

Join us in praying for his family, friends and ministry.

– BGEA (@BGEA) March 11, 2021

The World Prayer Centre in Birmingham, U.K., asked its

followers to pray for the Palau family and to share their “stories and remembrances or express your condolences”:

Breaking Prayer News Palau Family

Please pray for the Palau Family as they deal with the loss of #LuisPalau today

What did Luis Palau mean to you?

Click the link to share your stories and remembrances or express your condolences to the family ://

– World Prayer Centre (@worldprayerc) March 11, 2021

Javier Chavez, former missionary and planter-pastor at Amistad Cristiana in Gainesville, Georgia, and visiting professor at Truett-McConnell University, also expressed his condolences on Twitter:

Our Lat Amer Billy Graham went to be with Jesus. Luis Palau never compromised his message during convulsed socio-political yrs in the region. It's believed he said to Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua, "neither Communism nor Capitalism can free a man's soul, only the blood of Christ can"

– Javier Chavez (@jynchavez) March 11, 2021

Doug Stringer, president and founder of Somebody Cares USA/International, commented on Kevin Palau's announcement: "Our hearts and prayers with you and your family! The legacy and testimony of the Lord continues through each of you and the untold multitudes who have been impacted by the ministry of Christ through Luis Palau and ministries."

Ed Stetzer, professor and dean at Wheaton College who also serves as executive director of Wheaton's Billy Graham Center, tweeted his respect for Palau and his legacy:

New: "Luis Palau Is With the Lord: No Regrets for Proclaiming the Gospel."

Celebrating the life and legacy of @LuisPalauLive.

"Well done, good and faithful servant!... Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:23).

– Ed Stetzer (@edstetzer) March 11, 2021

Please join the Charisma News staff in praying for the Palau family and the many who will mourn the loss of this great servant of the King, who was used of God to bring untold numbers into His kingdom. {eo}

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