

Around the World for 40 Years

A who's who of pastors and Christian leaders turned out for  a screening of *The Cross: The Arthur Blessitt Story* at the Holy Land Experience in Orlando, Fla., on Tuesday night. Across the country, Matt Crouch hosted live on Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) a separate screening celebration at Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles, where Blessitt's nearly 40-year journey started.

Among those attending in Florida were Jentezen Franklin from Gainesville, Ga.; Mark Chironna, pastor of Master's Touch International Church in Orlando; and Vonette Bright, co-founder of Campus Crusade for Christ. Crouch was joined by Blessitt, actor Pat Boone, worship artist Israel Houghton and others.

The film chronicles the nearly four decades that Blessitt has carried a 12-foot wooden cross around the world. The Mississippi-born evangelist has traveled to 315 countries and walked more than 38,000 miles. Crouch, CEO of Gener8Xion Entertainment, has known Blessitt for many years and realized last year that it was time to tell his story. The film opens March 27 in theaters nationwide.

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Blessitt began his ministry on Sunset Strip and became known as the "Sunset Strip Minister." Because he loved the people he met on the Strip, he was reluctant to leave when he sensed God calling him to walk around the world carrying a wooden cross. But God reminded him that Sunset Strip stretches around the world.

Blessitt was ready to obey. Two weeks before he was to leave Los Angeles, however, doctors discovered he had a brain aneurysm. He explains in the film that circumstances don't change the call of God. Facing possible death, Blessitt

decided he would rather die while in God's will than to live out of it. He left on schedule—Christmas Day 1969.

Moviegoers will be inspired by Blessitt's passion and commitment to not only answer God's call but also to persevere even in the midst of incredible danger. Blessitt says he learned along the way to see hardships and difficulties not as stumbling blocks but as stepping stones. "The safest place to be is in the will of God," he says onscreen.

Blessitt has traveled through 52 war zones, been arrested 24 times and beaten multiple times, but he has also seen miracles as God protected him, kept him alive and brought him through. Throughout his lengthy mission, he's had the opportunity to minister to countless people. That now includes millions more who, in watching *The Cross*, will undoubtedly be inspired by the lessons he's learned and the relationship he developed with the Lord—both conveyed powerfully onscreen. Ultimately, Blessitt says, it's all about loving God and people.

It was Crouch, as the movie's director and narrator, who best summed up this film: "It's not about the cross carrier; it's about what the cross did to the cross carrier."

Before the Florida audience saw the film, Crouch teased Franklin on-air to remember the advice, "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all." But Crouch had nothing to worry about because those present had only kudos for the filmmaker and Blessitt.

Franklin admitted that before seeing the film he wondered if it would keep his attention. Afterward, however, he told Crouch that it was the greatest thing he'd ever seen, adding that every Christian needed to see this life-changing, powerful movie. To fellow Christians he declared: "This is our message. This is our film." Franklin said it's also for unbelievers and thinks that "God is going to astonish us with what He is going to do with this film."

Crouch agreed. "It's time for the message of the cross."

Bright believes this film is an answer to prayer. She and her late husband, Bill Bright, desired for years to see the medium of film honor God. And the movie does just that. She told the audiences that what we learn from this story is that "the important thing in life is to be where He wants us to be. ... There's nothing like trusting Jesus."

To read more about *The Cross: The Arthur Blessitt Story*, click [here](#).