

Evangelist Billy Graham's Health Declining

Franklin Graham, son of evangelist **Billy Graham**, said Friday that his father's health has worsened in the past few days.

Graham told Charlotte station WSOC-TV at a Christmas charity event, "My father's health has declined quite a bit in the last few days. I'm not even sure he knows **Nelson Mandela** has passed away. He hasn't been able to get his strength back. Vitals are good. He's just weak and at home."

Graham turned 95 in November, just a month after a hospital visit for tests on his pulmonary system. He has suffered from respiratory problems for years.

The younger Graham, who leads Samaritan's Purse, spoke at an event held at the Billy Graham Library to collect shoe boxes filled with gifts for children in need.

After his father's last hospital stay, Graham wrote in a statement, "My father is encouraged and he's surrounded by people who care for him and love him so he's in good hands. At 95, people praying for my father's health is always appreciated."

Billy Graham marked his latest birthday on Nov. 7 with a gathering of 800 people in Asheville, N.C., as well as a powerful nationwide evangelistic broadcast called *The Cross*, in which he gave another invitation to accept the gospel.

Graham has preached to an estimated 215 million people in 185 countries.