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Billy Graham - The Facts by Terry Arnold & Mike Claydon



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There have been one or two times in this ministry when an article has brought an array of fierce and even hostile criticism. One of those episodes was concerning an article in *Diakrisis* June/1998 (P.4). In that article we wrote no editorial comment - simply quotations of remarks made by 'America's pastor' - Billy Graham. These quotes demonstrated the dramatic shift in his views and teachings over the years concerning Ecumenism, the Papacy, Roman Catholicism, and other false religions. Some readers were dismayed and shocked to learn of the actual beliefs of Billy Graham himself. Others were angered and refused to believe the facts, many unsubscribing from our newsletter. One local pastor even stated that the quotes were 'false'. For that pastor we collected additional references for the same quotes. Still he refused to believe the evident apostasy. It seemed Billy Graham was so loved by many that most Christians had not actually checked what he now believed and had not seen the dramatic shift in his views over many years.

No doubt at one time he was a marvellous public preacher of the Gospel and had the ability to grip people's hearts with the truth of Christ and His Gospel. No doubt many have come to the Lord through his evangelistic preaching and worldwide crusades. However, what was not understood by many Christians was that in the 1960's there had been a seismic shift in his views and his referral methods and evident in his Gospel messages also. A view of his messages in early years in comparison to later years shows evidence of a watering down of doctrine and the increase of Ecumenical inclusiveness, universalism and liberal views.

We write this article now in an effort to challenge people as to the discernment that is needed to sift through what looks appealing and pure and yet may not always be what we should support. If anything, the critics and Billy Graham supporters should be greatly pleased that we are merely quoting exactly what Graham has said. To these people we say - 'don't get mad with us, but consider the facts and the quotes'! Facts are facts. When people get mad at truth and facts then there has to be serious questions as to their discernment and love of the truth?

The Problem of 'Decisional Evangelism'

As early as Sept. 21, 1957, Graham said in an interview with the San Francisco News, '*Anyone who makes a decision at our meetings is seen later and referred to a local clergyman, Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish*'. In 1983, The *Florida Catholic* (Sept.2, 1983) reported of the Orlando crusade: '*Names of Catholics who had made decisions for Christ were provided at that meeting by Rick Marshall of the Graham organisation*'. The report said the names of 600 people had been turned over to the Catholic Church. In 1984, at the Vancouver British Columbia crusade, the vice-chairman of the organizing committee, David Cline said, '*If Catholics step forward there will be no attempt to convert them and their names will be given to the Catholic church nearest their homes*' (*Vancouver Sun*, Oct.5, 1984). In 1987 Catholic priest, Donald Willette of St. Jude's Church was a supervisor of the 6,600 counsellors for the Denver crusade. Willette reported that from one service alone 500 cards of individuals were referred to St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Englewood, a suburb of Denver. By September 1992, the Catholic archdiocese of Portland, Oregon, had set a goal to supply 6,000 of the 10,000 counsellors needed for the Graham crusade. All Roman Catholics responding to the altar call were channelled to Catholic churches. These are just a few examples of the hundreds that could be given. (David Cloud, *Way of Life*).

How many of these thousands of people would believe they are saved by a 'decision'? In an interview with Time Magazine Graham admitted that he does not believe that half his converts are really Christians (*Aust. Beacon*, 8/97, P.5). The greatest deception of all is that one would think they are saved but in the end no visible fruit of conversion is evident. They remain unredeemed. (Matt.7:21- 23). The Parable of the Sower also addresses these ones who believe in vain and fall away remaining in unbelief. (Matt.13). Because of the emphasis on the "decision" and "walking the aisle" they are often then persuaded that they have become a Christian. (See our article 'The greatest Deception').

We live in an age where deception and error is clothed in subtle, politically and socially correct terms. Billy Graham may well be with the Lord, and we praise God for many possibly converted under his ministry. Yet to endorse his ministry, his beliefs and his methods shows a lack of discernment at best and an alarming propensity to accept apostasy at worst?

Terry Arnold & Mike Claydon

it not bother us if anyone remains unsaved? The ecumenical movement is full of hypocrisies which dilute the Gospel.

‘Just As I Am’

Billy Graham’s definition of the Gospel, as shown in his autobiography ‘*Just As I Am*’, is: ‘*God loves us. He yearns to forgive us and bring us back to Himself. He wants to fill our lives with meaning and purpose right now...Moreover, God has done everything possible to reconcile us to Himself...now it is up to us to ‘accept’ Him...In God’s plan by His death on the cross, Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sins...Now God freely offers us the gift of forgiveness and eternal life...God has done everything possible to provide salvation. But we must reach out in faith and ‘accept’ it...*’ (P.727-728). This Gospel wrongly suggests Jesus has done His bit, now you do yours. But this same gospel is presented by liberals, Roman Catholics and many others. The book itself says: ‘*As Rose Kennedy...said to Graham, ‘You know I often listen to you. Even though we are Catholics, I have never heard you say anything we don’t agree with in the Bible’*’ (P.401).

What we learn from Graham’s autobiography is that preaching the message which the world wants to hear can bring fame and honour. Yet preaching the true Gospel, including the plight of sinful man, the wrath of God, the need for a Saviour to satisfy God’s judgement upon sin, is not popular. Jesus said the world will hate the true Christian who does so. Yet the world mostly loved Billy Graham. He was one of the most popular Christian figures the world has seen. Contrary to plain scripture, Billy Graham never separated from those who embraced sacramentalism as a way and work of salvation. He has fellowshiped with false religion and false religious leaders and met and spoken well of the Pope, who the Reformers and Protestant leaders before him saw as antichrist.

Ecumenical Backflips

As early as 1957 Billy Graham conducted his first Ecumenical crusade and was immediately taken to task by leading Fundamentalists. John R. Rice the editor of ‘*Sword of the Lord*’ newsletter - which Graham was involved with, wrote to Graham asking him if he could still sign their doctrinal statement which stated: ‘*...verbal inspiration of the Bible, the deity of Christ, His blood atonement, salvation by faith...opposing modernism, worldliness, and formalism*’. Graham replied that he could not and resigned. The years following were to see him shift further in his previous stance that Roman Catholicism was a false religion. Graham once understood the truth that Roman Catholicism presented a gospel diametrically opposed to the Biblical gospel as delivered by the long line of Reformers and Protestant church leaders down the running centuries. The Roman teachings of Christ being sacrificed as the ‘same and continuing sacrifice’ upon their altars; the sacraments as a means of Grace and works ‘necessary for salvation’; the addition of Purgatory where you spend time at death to purify residual sins; Mary as a sinless risen person to be prayed to and adored; and the many unbiblical traditions of the Roman church - these amount to a ‘another Jesus’ and ‘another gospel’ ‘cursed’ by God (2Cor.11:4; Gal.1:6-9).

In 1948 Graham, while holding a small tent crusade in Los Angeles, stated, ‘*The three gravest menaces faced by orthodox Christianity are Communism, Roman Catholicism and Mohammedanism*’. But by 1963 he stated ‘*I admire Pope John tremendously... I felt he brought a new era to the world*’ (Chicago Tribune, 8/6/63; Michigan City News [Christian] Dispatch; 6/8/63).

In 1948 Graham commented on the World Council of Churches inaugural meeting: ‘*I believe they are going to nominate the antichrist*’. Yet in 1991 Billy Graham praised the World Council of Churches and since 1968 he attended all WCC assemblies. In 1972 Graham said, ‘*There is a great need for an ecumenical Christian body much broader in scope than either the World Council of Churches or the National Council of Churches*’ (NCC)’ (FEA Nov,1972). Yet a 1966 poll showed that less than one quarter of the NCC leaders believed in the virgin birth and many did not believe in the deity of Christ. The NCC was also pro-abortion and pro-homosexuality. More than 100 of its leaders have been cited for

aiding communist organisations. (Documented by Darrell Turner, RNS Associate Editor, 17/8/91). Yet in 1991 at a National Council of Churches (NCC) meeting on 27/8/91 Graham praised the group as follows: *'There's no group of people in the world that I would rather be with right now than you all...we follow with great interest the things you do...And I love everybody equally and I have no problem in fellowship with anybody who says that Jesus Christ is Lord'*. (Foundation, June/August 1991, P.34). Preaching in apostate Episcopal Bishop James Pike's cathedral, at a Council of Churches meeting, Graham prayed for the *'success of the current assembly of National Council of Churches'*. This same Bishop Pike denied the virgin birth, the incarnation, the Trinity, claimed ghostly contacts with his suicided son and was unofficially charged with heresy. Despite this, in the San Francisco Crusade Graham had Pike on the platform and had him lead in prayer!

Historians, including Iain Murray who wrote many biographies of famous church leaders, speak of 'neo Evangelicism' and its departure from Evangelicism. Iain Murray was scathing of Billy Graham's ministry and cited Billy Graham as a key figure in this doctrinal drift. As early as the 1957 New York crusade the sponsorship was increasingly from non Evangelicals or by liberals. Graham's pragmatic attitude was 'what difference does it make who sponsors'. Then he began to send those who made 'decisions' for Christ back to their own churches. Graham said he listened to the 'fundamentalist' arguments against this but decided to continue on regardless. The decision was said to be justified by the results. The results were that Graham's ministry, backed by the support of Roman Catholics and other cults, grew rapidly in numbers attending.

In England, leaders like Martyn Lloyd Jones, argued that the Ecumenical drive for unity challenged the legitimacy of Evangelical belief. Lloyd Jones in 1963 was asked to chair a congress on evangelism in Berlin. Lloyd Jones was glad to do so on two conditions: 1. That Billy Graham stopped cooperation with non Evangelicals and Liberals. 2. That he stopped his public appeal for decisions and simply preach the Gospel. Graham could not cut off Liberals and Roman Catholics, so Lloyd Jones was dismissed. Lloyd Jones spoke of these issues personally with Billy Graham and appealed against the public 'altar call' and the decisional techniques which showed a huge gap between the decisions and those who went on to be truly converted. Lloyd Jones firmly believed the

cross, no matter if you were talking to him on a personal issue or an ethical problem, he felt that there was the answer to all of our problems, the cross and the resurrection. And he was a strong believer'.

The 'cross' here the Pope believed in is an entirely different one to the one Graham taught in the 50's and what the Bible describes? The Roman Catholic cross has Jesus remaining there and being sacrificed afresh at every 'Mass', contrary to Hebrews 6:6; 9:26-28; 10:10. He did not die for all of our sins when we believed, but those sins receive pardon from a priest and/or in Purgatory. As one Christian ministry put it: *'For Graham to make such a statement is to lend credence to a false gospel which claims salvation comes to those who merit the favour of God by their works. Pope John Paul II served as the chief herald of this damnable false gospel throughout his many years as leader of the world's Roman Catholics'* (Foundation Magazine, March/April 2005).

In 2012 it was reported Billy Graham had removed an article describing Mormonism as a 'cult' from his Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's (BGEA) website following Republican presidential candidate [Mormon] Mitt Romney's visit with Graham. The article described The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [Mormons]...as a group that *'teaches doctrines or beliefs that deviate from the biblical message of the Christian faith'*. Ken Barun, chief of staff for BGEA, claimed they removed the article so it would not become politicised during a campaign. Billy Graham was impressed with Romney's *'successful career...his values and strong moral convictions'*. Franklin Graham, Billy Graham's son and BGEA president/CEO, told The Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) in December 2011 that Romney's Mormon faith *'doesn't bother me at all'* (Jeff Schapiro, *Christian Post* Oct.16, 2012; *Apostasy Alert*, 20th Oct.).

Ecumenism is laced with a so called 'non confrontational' approach toward opposing doctrines that affect the Gospel. Why mention Mormonism on the website in the first place and why remove it because of a visit by any Mormon? Jesus spoke of those not willing to profess openly *'because they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God'* (Jn.12:42,43). Mormons do often have *'values and strong moral convictions'*, but does that deliver them into the kingdom of Heaven? And why does it not 'bother' the BGEA that anyone is a Mormon? Does

On January 21, 1997, Larry King interviewed Billy Graham on his program, 'Larry King - Live':

King: 'What do you think of the other [churches]...like Mormonism, Catholicism, other faiths within the Christian concept?'

Graham: 'Oh, I think I have a wonderful fellowship with all of them...'

King: 'You're comfortable with Salt Lake City? [Mormon headquarters]. You comfortable with the Vatican?'

Graham: 'I am very comfortable with the Vatican. I have been to see the Pope several times...In fact the night - the day that he was inaugurated, and made Pope, I was preaching in his Cathedral in Krakow. I was his guest...[and] when he was over here...in Columbia, South Carolina...he invited me on the platform to speak with him. I would give one talk, and he would give the other...'

King: 'You like this Pope?'

Graham: 'I like him very much...he and I agree on almost everything'.

King: 'Are you...are you comfortable with Judaism?'

Graham: 'Very comfortable...In New York, they have had me in the rabbinical council to...talk with them and Rabbi Tannenbaum, of whom I was a great friend...he gave me more advice and more counsel, and I depended on him constantly, theologically and spiritually in every way...'

King: 'Mr Graham, if you had thirty seconds during the half time at the Superbowl, what would you tell the audience?'

Graham: 'I would tell them to...think about another game...the game of life, and to be sure they're on God's side, that God loves them and God is interested in them, and they can pray to God, and He answers their prayers'.

On April 4th 2005 Larry King interviewed Billy Graham on CNN:

King: 'There is no question in your mind Pope John Paul II is with God now?'

Graham: 'Oh, no...I think he's with the Lord, because he believed. He believed in the cross. That was his focus throughout his ministry, the

Gospel was demeaned if we work alongside Liberals and false religions, many of whom did not even believe in the Biblical resurrection or the atonement.

In Billy Graham's autobiography the only reference to Martyn Lloyd Jones is a one liner that in 1952 Lloyd Jones 'stood in a queue to shake my hand'.

The Billy Graham organisation had begun to take a very different stance on Roman Catholicism, and crusades increasingly began to support the religion, the Pope and its priests. Graham's crusades began to refer Roman Catholic 'converts' back to their churches. A timeline can be constructed as to the turn in Graham's views towards other false religions:

1961: 'I believe that a miracle can happen in these children so that they are regenerated, that is, made Christian, through infant baptism. If you want to call that Baptismal Regeneration, that's all right with me'. (Graham, 'Lutheran Standard' 10/10/61; Cited fully by John R. Rice in 'Dr. Graham's Daring: Facing Both Ways At Once!', P.3)

1967: Billy Graham was awarded an honorary degree by Roman Catholic Belmont Abbey College. Graham told a predominantly Roman Catholic audience: 'Now we can speak to one another, work with one another and be brothers to one another... That gospel that founded this [Catholic] school, that gospel has brought me here tonight is still the way of salvation'. (Gastonia Gazette, 22/11/67; 'Evangelical Action', 1/2/68)

1968: 'I believe there is a great deal to learn from other religions in the Far East, especially from Buddhism'. (Graham, Japanese Press Conference; Christian Beacon 1/2/68)

1972: On April 21st, Graham received the Franciscan (Catholic) International Award for Ecumenism.

1973: In the Key 73 Crusade, Graham recommended Roman Catholic literature, including a biography of Pope John Paul VI, which contained many pages of devotion to Mary, saint worship, the Mass and salvation through sacraments, etc. Graham advertised this book as 'a classic devotion'. (Key '73: Congregational Resource Book; The Gospel

Standard, 2/86; Brown, ‘Billy Graham: Custodian of the faith or figure of compromise?’ P.14)

1977: ‘*We have received wondrous support from the Catholic Church*’ (Christianity Today, 3012/77)

1978: October - Graham preached in Poland at Pozan’s Catholic Church. He prayed that ‘*The Holy Spirit would unite the hearts of the Roman Catholics and Protestants*’.

1978: ‘*I praise the greatness of the present Pope Paul the sixth*’. (Poland, 1978)

1978: ‘*I am far more tolerant of other kinds of Christians than I once was. My contact with Catholics, Lutheran and other leaders...has helped me, hopefully, to move in the right direction. I found that my beliefs are essentially the same as those of orthodox Catholics. We only differ on some matters of later church tradition*’. (McCalls Magazine - interview, 1978; *The Baptist Challenge*, 1/95)

1979: ‘*The visit of Pope John Paul II to the United States is an event of great significance... for all Americans - as well as the world... A new interest in spiritual matters could be the beginning of a new wave of spiritual revival in our nation... The Pope’s visit comes at a critical time in our world... My prayers and the prayers of countless other Protestants will be with him as he makes his journey*’. (Billy Graham, *Religious News Service*, 27/9/79 - made available by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association)

1979: On live TV Billy Graham publicly welcomed the Pope to America and praised him as a great ‘*spiritual leader*’.

1979: Billy Graham appeared on the Phil Donahue Live show and said of the Pope: ‘*I think the American people are looking for a leader, a moral and spiritual leader that believes something. And the Pope does... Thank God, I’ve got somebody to quote now with some real authority*.’ (Phil Donahue Show, 10/11/79)

1980: ‘*Pope John Paul the second is one of the greatest moral and spiritual leaders of this century. He is an evangelist. He has sought to speak to the spiritual hunger of our age in the same way Christians throughout the centuries have spoken to the spiritual yearning of every*

age!’ (Written by Graham in the *Saturday Evening Post*, Jan/Feb., 1980; also on Phil Donahue Show on 10/11/79; and in the Poland tour 1978).

1988: ‘*World travel and getting to know the clergy of all denominations has helped mould me into an Ecumenical being*’. (*US News and World Report*, 19/12/88).

By the nineties the crusades were actively engaging with Roman Catholic leaders and sending ‘converts’ back to Roman Catholic churches. ‘*When evangelist Billy Graham invited listeners to commit their lives to Jesus Christ last September in Charlotte, N.C., 1,700 of those who responded to his call were Catholics... The decision cards they filled out were given to the local Catholic diocese for follow up discipleship work, crusade officers said. Comparable numbers of Catholics have gone forward at other recent Graham crusades. In recent crusades in Minneapolis and Cleveland in 1994, it was nearly 6,000 each... Rev. Joseph Helsinki, Ecumenical director for the diocese of Cleveland said the Graham team’s faithfulness in dispatching Catholic decision cards to the [Catholic] diocese... made Catholic leaders eager to cooperate when Graham returned...*’ (*The Berean Call*, 6/97, *San Antonio Express - News*, 4/3/97).

The timeline continued...

1993: ‘*I’m equally at home in a Baptist church, Anglican church, or Roman Catholic church*’. (TV interview (30/5 PBS))

1993: ‘*When it comes to a literal fire, I don’t preach it because I’m not sure about it*’. (Graham had a long held belief that Hell is merely ‘*separation from God*’) (*Time Magazine* 15/11/93; *Calvary Contender*, 15/6/97).

1993: ‘*That’s why it’s so important for us to have prayer groups...and join hands together, whether we’re Protestants, Catholics, or Jews, and pray, because we’re praying to the same God*’. (Jan/93 interview with David Frost)

1993: ‘*I’m delighted the Pope is coming [to Denver]...I admire the Pope even though I don’t agree with him on everything...*’ (Graham, 7/12/93 interview by Joan Lunden, ABC - TV, ‘*Good Morning America*’; *Christian News*, 9/6/93; *Australian Beacon*, 10/93, P.8; *Calvary Contender*, 1/10/93)