

Graham Returns to Roots

Rose Bowl – Pasadena , CA –

LOS ANGELES—Evangelist Billy Graham has announced plans—via long-time associate Cliff Barrows—to return to Los Angeles, where he’s realized some of his greatest ministry impact through the years; Graham is slated to hold a crusade for the Greater Los Angeles community July 29-Aug. 1, 2004 at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

During an “announcement celebration” at the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood, Barrows responded to an invitation issued late last year from religious and community leaders throughout the Los Angeles area by reading from Graham’s letter of acceptance. The evangelist was recently released from Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida, where he had been recovering from a partial hip replacement.



“It is overwhelming to receive an invitation to once again come to Southern California to proclaim the Gospel—I never dreamed I would still be preaching at the age of eighty-five,” Graham wrote. “But the call the Lord has laid upon my heart to share the Good News is as strong as when I was much younger. God has granted me renewed strength, energy, freedom and determination to preach the Gospel.

“Because God has specifically placed Los Angeles on our hearts recently, it is with great excitement that I make plans to return to the Los Angeles area in a few months,” he continued. “I feel somewhat like the Apostle Paul in wanting to go back to places where we have ‘preached the Lord to see how they are doing.’ More important, however, there is a new generation that needs to hear the Gospel since our last crusade there in 1985. And now, Lord willing, I am looking forward with great anticipation to the Greater Los Angeles Crusade.”

More than 400 local pastors and community leaders were on hand at the event to launch this cooperative effort which will involve more than 1,000 area churches representing over 50 denominations. Among them were leaders announced to oversee the upcoming crusade preparations, including Rev. Lloyd Ogilvie, former Senate chaplain and pastor emeritus of First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood, who will serve as honorary chair. Bishop Kenneth C. Ulmer, pastor at Faithful Central

Bible Church—and a speaker at the upcoming Prayer and Revival Summit at Crestmont College—and Dr. Jack Hayford, senior pastor at The Church on The Way, are the co-chairs.

“We need a spiritual awakening and greater unity among our diversified population to confront challenges in this city,” Dr. Ogilvie said. “Most of all, we need to reach out to millions of people who long to know God and experience His peace and power. The pastors and lay leaders of Los Angeles who have banded together in support of the Greater Los Angeles Crusade expect an outpouring of God’s blessing in this return of Billy Graham.”

Recounting Mr. Graham’s previous ministry in the community, Bishop Ulmer said “For reasons known only to Him, God has sovereignly chosen to do mighty works in Los Angeles. And we greatly anticipate the return of Dr. Graham to Los Angeles for a crusade at the Pasadena Rose Bowl in July.

“We come together to overcome the things that divide us—all the schisms, and ‘isms’ that should be ‘wasms’—and trust God once again to do a great work in our city,” Bishop Ulmer continued. “The motivation and inspiration will go far beyond the benediction of the final meeting.”

“The Billy Graham campaign sets a historic moment before our city, as spiritual lightning has struck L.A. in his former crusades and I believe it is about to again,” Dr. Hayford said. “We expect a positive impact to take place across the spectrum of human need and hurt. That’s why so many church and community leaders are banding together.”

“This crusade will be much more than a four-day event in July; we’re serving the goal of a long-term spiritual refreshing, revealing that God hasn’t given up on Los Angeles,” Dr. Hayford added, referring to the cross-denominational cooperation exhibited as leaders have united together to invite Mr. Graham to town. “God loves the people of our city, and each one deserves to know how much.”

Event participants from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association included Cliff Barrows, longtime program director for Billy Graham crusades, and a partner in ministry to Mr. Graham for more than 50 years. Vice President of Crusades and Training, Tom Phillips; Vice President of Billy Graham Crusades, Larry Turner; and Greater Los Angeles Crusade Director, Jeff Anderson, were also present to encourage local organizers looking ahead to the coming months of preparation.

Mr. Turner expressed appreciation to area pastors for their willingness to come together for this effort, including many who have had to be flexible with their own summer ministry plans to accommodate the best schedule for Mr. Graham. “This is a very well-respected group of leaders, and I look forward to working with them in the coming months as we prepare for the great work of the Gospel in this community,” he said.

This will be Mr. Graham’s seventh evangelistic campaign in the Los Angeles area, including his historic 1949 crusade that brought him and his ministry to national attention. His crusades in the area include the eight-week campaign held in a tent at the corner of Washington and Hill, that saw 350,000 in attendance. Mr. Graham went on to host meetings in 1958 at East Los Angeles Junior College, in 1963 at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, in 1974 at the Hollywood Bowl, and two events at Anaheim

Stadium, in 1969 and 1985. Altogether, more than 75,000 individuals have made decisions for Christ at Billy Graham crusades in the Greater Los Angeles area.

Last year, Mr. Graham held crusades in San Diego, in May, and Oklahoma City, in June. The meetings in San Diego drew 270,000 in attendance, with 16,000 inquirers over the four-day event. The Oklahoma City crusade saw 102,000 in attendance, with 4,359 inquirers. Last month, Mr. Graham announced his first 2004 crusade, to be held at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Mo., June 17-20.