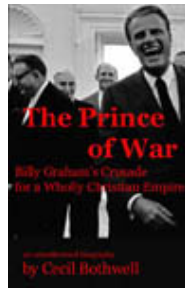


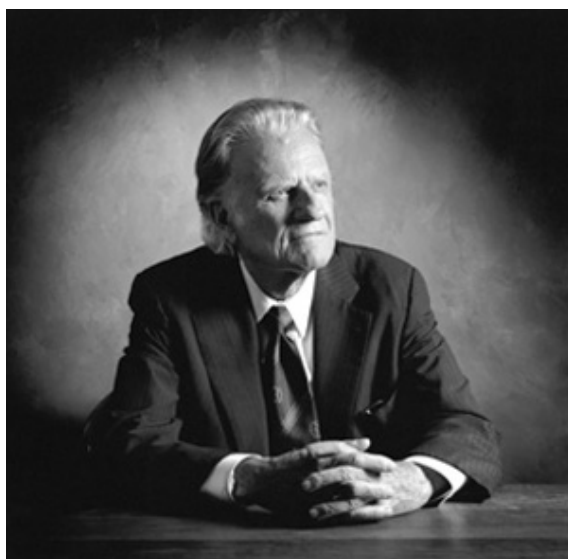
## The Prince of War: Rev. Billy Graham



Cecil Bothwell's "The Prince of War: Billy Graham's Crusade for a Wholly Christian Empire" paints a dramatic picture of America's favourite cleric. Rather than a Prince of Peace, Bothwell reveals an opportunist, a racist, but especially "a Billy Graham who has been an unabashed nationalist, capitalist, militarist and advocate for American empire."

The propaganda machine of the Evangelical Christian Right will soon be in counter-attack mode. One of its darling preachers is about to take it on the proverbial chin. The Rev. Billy Graham, who has created a multimillion dollar media empire that a Rupert Murdoch would envy, is the subject of a shocking expose' out on November 15, 2007. It's entitled, "The Prince of War: Billy Graham's Crusade for a Wholly Christian Empire." The author is Cecil Bothwell, an award winning investigative reporter.

Bothwell's unflattering portrait of Rev. Graham shows him as a wily warmonger and a lackey for the Establishment. He describes Rev. Graham as a public figure who: "Undermined the Founders' skeptical Deism and sought to rebrand the U.S. as a Christian nation, [and] its armies [as] the rightful instruments of [a] Christian crusade and empire."



Bothwell documents that there wasn't a war the US was involved in that Rev. Graham couldn't bless. In fact, he reveals that during the horrific Vietnam conflict (1959-75), he had urged the then-President, Richard M. Nixon, to bomb North Vietnam! In a 13-page letter, which Rev. Graham had forwarded to the White House in April, 1969, it was stated: "There are tens of thousands of North Vietnamese defectors to bomb and invade the North. Why should all the fighting be in the South?... Especially let them bomb the dikes which could over night destroy the economy of North Vietnam." Bothwell underscored that such a military action against the dikes, a huge complex of earthworks, would probably "kill a million people and wipe out an already poor nation's agricultural system." He added that the advice in Graham's transmittal "fell on receptive ears. Not longer after, Nixon moved the air war north and west."

There is more. After the deadly Kent State University affair (May 4, 1970), where four students, who were protesting the Nixon-Kissinger inspired bombing of Cambodia, were killed by Ohio's National Guard troops, Rev. Graham invited the mostly unbalanced Nixon to address his crusade. It was held in Knoxville, TN. While parents of the students were still grieving and burying their dead, Rev. Graham stated: "All Americans may not agree with the decision a president makes - but he is our president..."

Also, every chance Rev. Graham got, he ripped into antiwar protesters, while the Vietnam inferno was raging. After a large pro-peace demonstration in late 1969, he railed in a letter to President Lyndon B. Johnson, that the protesters were "radicals and those seeking to overthrow the American way of life."

When the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke out, in 1967, against the war in a sermon at the Riverside Church in NYC, Rev. Graham, jumped right in and tagged his criticism as "an affront to the thousands of loyal Negro troops who are in Vietnam."

When Dr. King marched for Civil Rights in Selma, Alabama, Rev. Graham was nowhere to be found. And, after Dr. King was gunned down in Memphis, TN, he couldn't be bothered to attend his funeral either.

Rev. Graham made a career out of sucking up to US presidents. Bothwell writes how he loved those "endless photo-ops" at the White House, and how he was always, "so eager to shake the hands of... despots, movie stars and industrial kingpins, and to offer grandiose approval of their greatness. Obsequy, more than money, seemed to drive the man - though his pockets were never empty."

Fortunately, not all the presidents bought into Rev. Graham's bogus act. President Harry S. Truman knew a wide variety of people from political bosses to political hacks and had a built in bull-shit detector. This is what President Truman had to say about the war-loving, camera-mugging preacher: "Graham has gone off the beam. He's...well, I hadn't ought to say this, but he's one of those 'counterfeits' I was telling you about. He claims he's a friend of all the presidents, but he was never a friend of mine when I was president. I just don't go for people like that. All he's interested in is getting his name in the paper."



Just before Bush 1 (George H.W. Bush) launched the Persian Gulf War, he invited Rev. Graham to the White House. On January 16, 1991, they both watched the "air war against Iraq on CNN." Later that same evening, he prayed "three times" with the president before he delivered a "televised address to the nation." In a phone call to Bush 1, prior to that White House invite, Rev. Graham had supposedly referred to Saddam Hussein as the "Antichrist". This conversation reportedly helped Bush 1 to resolve "all the moral issues in my mind. It's black and white, good versus evil." Can anyone imagine Jesus watching a war on TV, without weeping aloud for its innocent victims, and demanding that it be stopped immediately?

As for the ongoing Iraq War, started by Bush 2 (George W. Bush Jr.), and based on a false justification for war, not one word of criticism has been heard from Rev. Graham. Even after the notorious torture scandal at Abu Ghraib was revealed, the preacher maintained his vow of silence

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on the president.

The country has lost 3,801 of its finest sons and daughters in Iraq and wasted \$455 billion. Another 27,000 US troops have been seriously injured. An estimated one million Iraqis are dead and about 3.7 million have become refugees. Yet, Rev. Graham, a supposed follower of the "Prince of Peace", has remained mute in his criticism. Why have we rarely heard Rev. Graham preach about Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount?" Why have we rarely, if ever, heard him repeat these words that came directly from the mouth of Christ: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God?"

Bothwell suggests a possible reason why Rev. Graham has failed to speak out about the unjust Iraq War and Bush 2's responsibility for it. On page 164, he relates how the preacher, in 1985, had supposedly "saved" Bush 2 from perdition. It was at the family compound at Kennebunkport. Bush 2 was drunk and had allegedly "insulted a friend of his mother." It was around the time of Bush 2's 39th birthday. Bothwell writes: "George senior and Barbara blew up. Words were exchanged along the lines of something having to be done. George senior, then the vice-president, dialed up his friend, Billy Graham, who came to the compound and spent several days with George W. in probing exchanges and walks on the beach. George W. was soon 'born again.' He stopped drinking, attended Bible study and wrestle with issues of fervent faith. A man who was lost was saved."



Bothwell states that he "first became curious about Billy Graham in March 2002. Like anyone else in our culture, I had been aware of his fame, his frequent appearances with presidents and his well-attended crusades, but an Associated Press story caught my eye. It said that recently released transcripts of taped conversations in the Nixon White House included an exchange between the preacher and the President, in 1972, about the malevolent influence of Jews in the United States. As reported in newspapers across the country, the conversation appeared to have been brief, a few sentences on either side which included the suggestion from Graham that something might be done

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about the problem after Nixon's re-election.

Graham's public relations firm issued an apology in which the preacher disavowed his anti-Semitic comments and a rapprochement was reached with a national association of rabbis. Graham was forgiven." Bothwell, however, felt the information that hit the newspapers, was not the total - or real - truth.

"I learned that the conversation had lasted an hour and a half, had rarely strayed from denunciation of Jews and had been led by Graham. That astonished me. Moreover, twenty minutes of conversation had been redacted before release. What, I wondered, had been suppressed?"

In his introduction, Bothwell states that "the past several decades may well rank as the most fearful time in human history - given that tangible threats to human life grew far beyond ancient phantasms of myth or the unfathomable mysteries posited by ignorance. What's more, electronic media have spread bad news everywhere, live and in colour, while modern print techniques erupted in the form of glossy news magazines employing photographers who fanned out across the globe.

It is no surprise that a ministry that preached fear and promised salvation could prosper in such times and Billy Graham proved expert at brandishing both stick and carrot in tents and stadia around the planet. [...] Graham's enthusiastic supporters in big media have consistently portrayed him as apolitical. As recently as February 2005, Time magazine reported, 'He has had the ear of Presidents for five decades, but except for his public disavowal of racial segregation, Billy Graham, 86, has stuck to soul saving and left the political proselytizing to others. He explained his self-imposed separation of church and state in the language of a Gospel preacher: It's not what I was called to do.'



However, notwithstanding his professed calling, it is apparent that Graham worked the corridors of Congress as well as the private rooms of the White House, sometimes overtly, sometimes quietly, in secret letters and private phone calls. And, quite contrary to Time's assertion, it seems that Graham did more to abet segregation than to end it, actively opposing Martin Luther King, Jr.'s use of civil disobedience while endorsing aggressive police tactics and punitive laws."

Bothwell's conclusions are powerful: "Like many another political figure, Graham has sealed most of the personal documents connected to his life and work until after - in some cases many years

after - his death. Nor did he consent to be interviewed for this work. But the published and unpublished documentary record speaks volumes. It reveals a Billy Graham who has been an unabashed nationalist, capitalist, militarist and advocate for American empire. The picture that emerges is decidedly not that of a disinterested man of the cloth. Rather, Graham often appears as a well connected covert political operative. To the extent that this seems surprising, it stems from the public's wilful naiveté concerning a self-professed holy man coupled with intentionally biased reporting from the major media at the behest of ideologues including, most prominently, William Randolph Hearst and Henry Luce.

Perhaps we should pay heed to what Graham has actually said instead of accepting his own and others' later versions of the facts. This tale is told in Graham's words and those of the biographers, historians, public figures and Presidents who knew him well.

You may be as surprised as I was at the picture that emerges in these pages. It is not the story of a man of peace."