

Upon Billy Graham's passing on Wednesday, we were reminded of his fondness for Young Life and our founder, Jim Rayburn. The two met in the early 1940s when Graham was attending Wheaton College and Rayburn was training Graham and other students in Young Life's methodology. The two remained strong friends until Rayburn's death. Below are some stories of the man and his connection with the mission.



WHAT A PAIR OF BANQUET SPEAKERS!

"Arnie Jacobs, at the time a young area director, was able to boast of something no one else would ever be able to claim: his 1958 Asheville, North Carolina, banquet featured both Jim Rayburn and Billy Graham as speakers.

Saturday, February 22

"A fine dinner party at the hotel with Asheville [sic] Committee - then the evening meeting was very profitable. At the end Billy Graham asked to speak & gave a hearty endorsement of Y.L. and pledged his full support of the work there. Committee very pleased. I was too."

From *The Diaries of Jim Rayburn*. P. 323

A TRIBUTE TO A FRIEND

Upon hearing of Jim's passing on December 11, 1970, he wired the Rayburn family the following message:

"Am glad Jim Rayburn is now in the arms of Jesus. He was one of the greatest Christians I ever knew, and he had a profound influence on my life. He had suffered a great deal in recent years, but I'm convinced that it is only through suffering that we can share in the glory of Christ. It is now up to us to carry the torch Jim so courageously carried for so many years."

From *Bondage to Liberty: Dance, Children, Dance*. P. 188

A WALK WITH THE WISE

After accepting the board's invitation [to become the mission's third president], Bob Mitchell sought Billy Graham's counsel, to see what advice the famed evangelist would give him on leadership.

The two met in Toronto, where Graham was conducting a campaign. "He gave me most of the afternoon," Mitchell said, "and we sat in his room and talked about leadership, the Gospel, his experiences, and mutual friends.

"That's when he said, 'Of all the organizations, the one I hear the most about from people having met Christ is Young Life. Most of the people working in our campaigns met the Lord in Young Life.' That was a startling thing for me to hear him say. Then he said, 'I really wish you well and I will pray for you. In fact, let's pray now.'

"When Billy Graham prays, he kneels, and we're in his hotel room, kneeling there at the bed. We prayed for kids and I can remember about halfway through his prayer, he broke down and began to cry. I'm thinking, 'Wow, how powerful.' Here's a man that doesn't just work with kids, but his heart is broken for kids.

"He was praying about his own children, as well as the needs of all the kids we would be meeting. That endeared the man to me. He knows what it is to minister out of brokenness, his own sense of forgiveness. I think that's where he's so powerful. The man knows he's been forgiven and will proclaim that wherever he is."

From *Made For This: The Young Life Story*. P. 91