



FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

A. Larry Ross (972) 267-1111
Melany Ethridge (214) 912-8934

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(to Religion/People Editors)

**BILLY GRAHAM TURNS 90 AS NATION
TRANSITIONS TO NEW LEADERSHIP**

Evangelist Reflects on Past Year, Prays for New President

CHARLOTTE, N.C., Nov. 5, 2008 – Billy Graham will celebrate his 90th birthday on Nov. 7, marking the milestone celebration with a private family dinner near the evangelist’s mountainside home outside Asheville, N.C.

For the past month, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), the worldwide ministry Billy Graham started in 1950, has been encouraging individuals around the world to bless and encourage the evangelist by sending a birthday greeting or a story of how his ministry impacted their life. Tens of thousands of these messages have been pouring in, and are being collected together to share with him as part of the birthday celebration.

“I never expected to live this long, and it is hard to believe I have reached the age of 90,” Mr. Graham said. “Every day is a gift from God, no matter how old we are. I have discovered that just because we grow weaker physically as we age, it doesn’t mean that we must grow weaker spiritually. In fact, we ought to be growing stronger spiritually, because our eyes ought to be on eternity and Heaven – on the things that really matter.”

Mr. Graham hopes to finish a new book project based on his personal experience with growing older and how to be prepared emotionally and spiritually for what he says can be the most fulfilling years of life. Despite the death last year of Ruth, his marriage and ministry partner of more than 63 years, Mr. Graham is buoyed by his family and the hope of the Gospel message he has faithfully preached for more than six decades.

“I look forward even more to the time when I will be reunited with my wife in heaven, and neither of us will ever experience again the physical aches and pains brought about by age and illness,” Mr. Graham added.

Mr. Graham stays informed about the ongoing ministry of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) under the leadership of his son, Franklin. This past year, he has participated in ministry board meetings and other activities as his health has allowed. He enjoys hearing the reports from around the world of the meetings led by Franklin – including a Festival he held in Taipei, Taiwan last weekend – his grandson Will, and other associate evangelists. He also follows closely the work of the ministry’s Rapid Response Team in times of crisis, such as the hurricanes in the Gulf Coast region earlier this year.

“I am proud of Franklin’s leadership of the BGEA, and the way it is showing the love of Christ to a hurting world and using new technology to share the Gospel message,” Mr. Graham said.

Mr. Graham has also paid close attention to the political cycle and the race for the White House, in light of a difficult economy and the ongoing war on terror. “President-elect Barack Obama faces many challenges, and I urge everyone to join me in pledging our support and prayers as he begins the difficult task ahead.”