

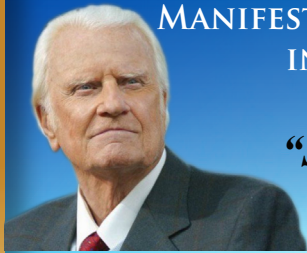
THE MODESTO MANIFESTO

From Billy Graham's Ministry Emerged a
Declaration of Biblical Integrity that
All Church Leaders Can Follow

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Frame!

"THE MODESTO MANIFESTO"

THE MODESTO MANIFESTO WAS THE PACT THAT SET THE STANDARD FOR BILLY GRAHAM'S SCANDAL-FREE MINISTRY. STUDY THIS MANIFESTO AND KEEP IT AS A GUARDIAN AGAINST ANY SCANDALS IN YOUR MINISTRY. FEEL FREE TO PRINT THIS OUT, FRAME IT AND KEEP IT BY YOUR DESK.



"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise." — Ephesians 5:15



IN YOUR LIFE AND MINISTRY, RESOLVE TO:

1. GUARD AGAINST FINANCIAL ABUSE



ACTION STEP:

Never handle church money without appropriate accountability.



SCRIPTURE:

"Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, 'I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.'"
— Hebrews 13:5 . (NLT)



GRAHAM QUOTE:

"In Modesto we determined to do all we could to avoid financial abuses and to downplay the offering and depend as much as possible on money raised by the local committee in advance."

2. GUARD AGAINST SEXUAL SIN



ACTION STEP:

Never travel or dine alone with a member of the opposite sex who is outside your family.



SCRIPTURE:

"Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts." — 2 Timothy 2:22 (NLT)



GRAHAM QUOTE:

"We pledged among ourselves to avoid any situation that would have even the appearance of compromise or suspicion. From that day on, I did not travel, meet or eat alone with a woman other than my wife. We determined that the Apostle Paul's mandate to the young pastor Timothy would be ours as well."

3. GUARD AGAINST PRIDE



ACTION STEP:

Never criticize fellow members of the clergy.



SCRIPTURE:

"And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'"
— James 4:6 (NLT)



GRAHAM QUOTE:

"We determined to cooperate with all who would cooperate with us in the public proclamation of the Gospel, and to avoid an antichurch or anticlergy attitude."

4. GUARD AGAINST LYING AND DECEIT



ACTION STEP:

Never exaggerate attendance figures at your services.



SCRIPTURE:

"An honest witness tells the truth; a false witness tells lies."
— Proverbs 12:17 (NLT)



GRAHAM QUOTE:

"In Modesto we committed ourselves to integrity in our publicity and our reporting."

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE ORIGIN OF THE “MODESTO MANIFESTO”



The ministry team of (L-R) Cliff Barrows, Grady Wilson, Billy Graham and George Beverly Shea remained strongly rooted in Biblical principles long after the Modesto Manifesto was drafted.

SNAPSHOT:

The Modesto Manifesto was the pact that set the standard for Billy Graham’s scandal-free ministry.

In November 1948, Graham called the members of his evangelistic team to his hotel room during a campaign in Modesto, California. “God has brought us to this point,” he said. “Maybe he is preparing us for something that we don’t know.” He and his team identified the issues that had been stumbling blocks to evangelists — and ways to prevent them from happening again. The list came to be known in the oral tradition as “The Modesto Manifesto.”

The Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College summarizes it well:

Protestant Fundamentalist and Evangelical circles in the United States. He was receiving more and more invitations to hold city-wide evangelistic meetings.

However, to many of the general public, evangelism had a bad reputation because of real and alleged misdeeds and corruption on the part of some earlier evangelists. During his meetings in Modesto, California, in November 1948, Graham met with his co-workers and friends George



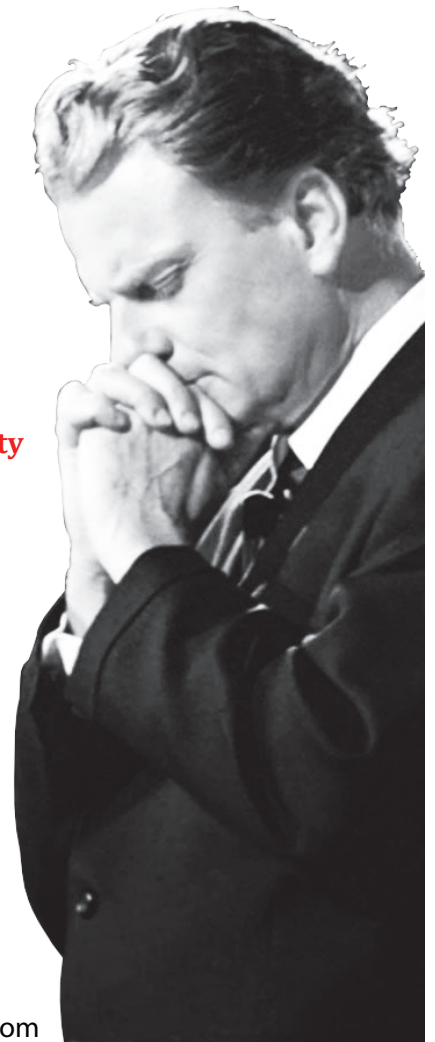
YFC director Ben Jennings, (right) welcomes Billy Graham to the “Canvas Cathedral” in Modesto in November 1948. Graham, a young unknown preacher at the time, spoke during a 10-day rally in a large tent that seated 2,000 people, located at Burney Street and La Loma Drive. The crusade drew 26,250 people over the 10 days.

Beverly Shea, Grady Wilson, and Cliff Barrows (at the motel on South Ninth Street where they were staying) to determine what were the most common criticisms of evangelists and how they should organize their own meetings so that they would be above reproach.

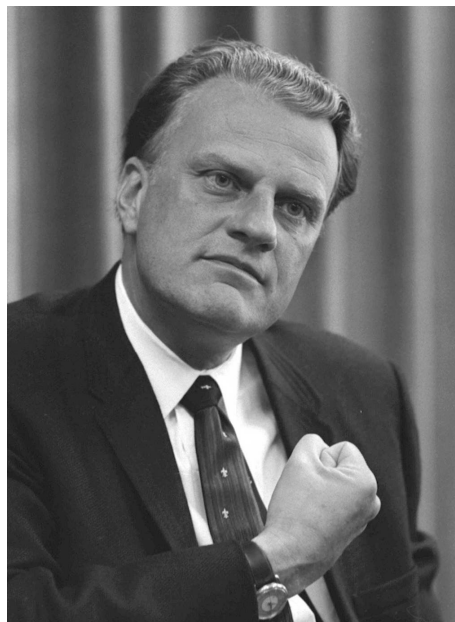
Among the points they agreed on was that the Graham team would:

- **avoid even any appearance of financial abuse,**
- **exercise extreme care to appearance impropriety** (from that point on, Graham made it a point not to travel, meet or eat alone with any wife Ruth),
- **to cooperate with any local churches that participate in united evangelism effort,**
- **and to be honest and reliable in their publicity and reporting of results.**

The so-called Modesto Manifesto was the name they gave among themselves to the principles they decided on and applied in Graham’s ministry from that point on. However, there was no formal document. In that sense, the Manifesto does not exist.”



IN HIS OWN WORDS: BILLY GRAHAM DESCRIBES THE CREATION OF THE MODESTO MANIFESTO



In the following excerpt from his autobiography, *Just As I Am*, Billy Graham went into further detail about the resolutions these men made in terms of financial integrity, sexual morality, publicity and partnership with the local church.

One afternoon during the Modesto meetings, I called the team together to discuss the problem. Then I asked them to go to their rooms for an hour and list all the problems they could think of that evangelists and evangelism encountered.

When they returned, the lists were remarkably similar, and in a short amount of time, we made a series of resolutions or commitment among ourselves that would guide us in our future evangelistic work. In reality, it was more of an informal understanding among ourselves—a shared commitment to do all we could do to uphold the Bible's standard of absolute integrity and purity for evangelists.

The first point on our combined list was money.

Nearly all evangelists at that time—including us—were supported by love offerings taken at the meetings. The temptation to wring as much money as possible out of an audience, often with strong emotional appeals, was too great for some evangelists. In addition, there was little or no accountability for finances. It was a system

that was easy to abuse—and led to the charge that evangelists were in it only for the money.

I had been drawing a salary from YFC (Youth for Christ) and turning all offerings from YFC meetings over to YFC committees, but my new independent efforts in citywide campaigns required separate finances. In Modesto we determined to do all we could to avoid financial abuses and to downplay the offering and depend as much as possible on money raised by the local committee in advance.

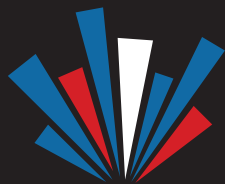
The second item on the list was the danger of sexual immorality. We all knew of evangelists who had fallen into immorality while separated from their families by travel. We pledged among ourselves to avoid any situation that would have even the appearance of compromise or suspicion. From that day on, I did not travel, meet or eat alone with a woman other than my wife. We determined that the Apostle Paul's mandate to the young pastor Timothy would be ours as well: "Flee ... youthful lusts" (2 Timothy 1:22, KJV).

Our third concern was the tendency of many evangelists to carry on their work apart from the local church, even to criticize local pastors and churches openly and scathingly. We were convinced, however, that this was not only counterproductive but also wrong from the Bible's standpoint. We determined to cooperate with all who would cooperate with us in the public proclamation of the Gospel, and to avoid an antichurch or anticlergy attitude.

The fourth and final issue was publicity. The tendency among some evangelists was to exaggerate their successes or to claim higher attendance numbers than they really had. This likewise discredited evangelism and brought the whole enterprise under suspicion. It often made the press so suspicious of evangelists that they refused to take notice of their work. In Modesto we committed ourselves to integrity in our publicity and our reporting.

An ad from the Oct. 23, 1948 edition of *The Modesto Bee*, promoting Billy Graham's "Canvas Cathedral" crusade. The Modesto crusade was a great success, with 26,250 people attending and 290 making decisions for Christ.

... In reality, [the Modesto Manifesto] did not mark a radical departure for us; we had always held these principles. It did, however, settle in our hearts and minds, once and for all, the determination that integrity would be the hallmark of both our lives and our ministry. Source: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association



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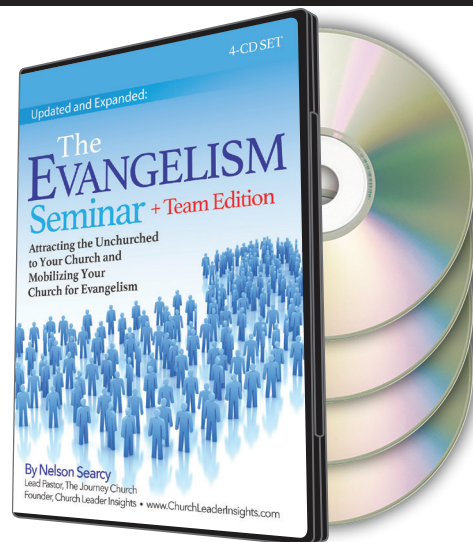
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