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the healing movement by criticising the 'narcissistic assumption that health is the highest of all goods'.³⁷

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Whilst we would distance ourselves from the vitriolic attacks and personal criticisms that Wimber has sometimes experienced from those who disagree with his teachings, we must not ignore the fact that at the heart of his views lies a different understanding of fundamental Christian truths to that which evangelicals have traditionally held. His teaching affects such subjects as the purpose of divine revelation, divine sovereignty, and the role and function of authentic Christian witness. Wimber is the innovator. He has openly challenged churches to improve on their evangelistic enterprises by adopting his methodology. One may admire his courage and his commitment to his 'mission', but crucial issues are at stake here and Christians should not allow them to be eroded without a fight.

³⁷ Lewis B. Smedes (ed.), *Ministry and the Miraculous: A Case Study at Fuller Theological Seminary* (Pasadena: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1987), 58.

THE BILLY GRAHAM GLOBAL MISSION SERMONS: THE POWER OF BELIEF

MARK GREENE

I. THE SCOPE OF THE ESSAY

Billy Graham is almost certainly the world's most famous preacher and undoubtedly the most effective evangelist of the post-war period. Although much has been written about his life,¹ his contribution to the unity of the church, global and local,² little has been written, in Britain at least, that analyses or even comments on his methods of sermon preparation or delivery. The major books on preaching and evangelistic preaching hardly mention him – Buttrick, Craddock, Lloyd-Jones, Loscalzo, Stott are all almost silent.³ Similarly, *The Handbook of Contemporary Preaching* includes no work about or by the evangelist in its extensive bibliography.⁴ Robert Williams (RW), Director of International Ministries at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's (BGEA) Headquarters, has himself completed an informal analysis of 140 of Graham's sermons but is not aware of any published work on the subject.⁵ Have we really nothing to learn from Dr Graham?

The 1995 Global Mission (March 16-18) is no exception to the analytical silence, with commentary focusing on results rather than delivery.⁶ Here was an extraordinary challenge – technological and homiletical. Technological, in that the logistics of independently setting up satellite venues in over 180 countries and over 2,000 different

¹ E.g. William Martin, *A Prophet with Honor: The Billy Graham Story* (New York: Quill, 1991).

² See e.g., Ian Randall, 'Conservative Constructionist: The Early Influence of Billy Graham in Britain', *EvQ* 67:4 (1995), 309-33.

³ David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* (London: SCM, 1987); Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985); D.M. Lloyd-Jones, *Preachers and Preaching* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1971); Craig A. Loscalzo, *Evangelistic Preaching That Connects: Guidance in Shaping Fresh and Appealing Sermons* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1995); John R.W. Stott, *I Believe In Preaching* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1982).

⁴ Michael Duduit (ed.), *The Handbook of Contemporary Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992).

⁵ Structured Telephone Interview, 4 December 1996. 'I don't think anyone has done any analytical work on him as a preacher.'

⁶ Cf. e.g., *Baptist Times* (27 March 1995), with the headline 'Mixed results...'

locations was a feat to rival global Olympic coverage.⁷ Homiletical, in that Graham would be preparing sermons not simply for translation into scores of different languages and dialects – something prior regional satellite broadcasts had achieved – but would seek to preach the Good News into every major cultural group in the world simultaneously, a challenge never attempted by him or any other preacher.

This essay reflects on the Global Mission commenting briefly on:

- The use of the satellite genre.
- The communication theology of such a mission.
- Graham's preparation to preach to all nations.

It then goes on to examine the major stylistic features of the three evening sermons transmitted globally and of the daytime evangelistic sermon from Puerto Rico offered to *The Times* as an Easter sermon.⁸ The analysis of the evening sermons is based on the videos produced by Evangelical Films, though I was present for broadcasts at the Shaftesbury Theatre, London, on Thursday 16 March and in a local Ruislip church on Friday 17 March.

Obviously, limitations of space mean that many issues have been left unexplored – an in-depth analysis of Graham's theology, his use of Scripture, the ethics of his evangelistic strategy and its relationship to contemporary persuasion theory, for example. Similarly, a full discourse analysis of each of the sermons has not been included, nor has there been space to compare Graham's present methods with past crusades or with the methods of other contemporary evangelists. Nevertheless, primary research with very senior representatives of the BGEA in the USA (Robert Williams) and in the UK (Maurice Rowlandson, UK National Co-ordinator, Global Mission), telephone interviews with leaders of participating UK churches, access to unpublished BGEA documents afforded me by my role in the mission's PR, and interaction with some of the major works on homiletics have generated a number of insights and hopefully a platform for more detailed study.

⁷ Cf. M. Southworth, Manager, Satellite Services, in *Media Update*, BGEA, Vol. 3 (1995): 'But in a way, it is more complicated than the Olympics, because we have to create more specific pathways to reach many smaller reception centres.'

⁸ The four sermons were as follows: Sermon 1 (S1) on John 3:16; Sermon 2 (S2) on the 'I am' sayings in John's gospel; Sermon 3 (S3) on Mark 8:36; Sermon 4 (S4) on Galatians 6:14.

II. THE EVENING MISSIONS: OVERALL STRUCTURE

Globally, each evening sermon was intended to be preceded by several pre-prepared elements:

1. Introduction from RW outside the stadium in Puerto Rico, including a statement about the nature of the message to follow.
2. A 25-minute film package, customised for 8 major regions of the world, featuring music and testimonials from a variety of musicians and famous or successful Christians. For example, in the anglophone west: Kriss Akabussi, Bernhard Langer, Cliff Richard, Robinson – the NBA Spurs' basketball star, Take 6, DC Talk, Elizabeth Dole, Jimmy Carter.

In reality, a number of British churches I contacted used their own material and did not show the films, judging them to be inappropriate for the people they had invited.⁹ Others felt uncomfortable with it. Certainly, the style of the music and the way it was presented would not have sounded or looked out of place on MTV, and for some the disadvantages of the musical presentation outweighed the advantages of the more traditional presentation of the testimonies from the sporting figures. The BGEA targeted under 30s deliberately but the response of the churches highlights the difficulty, in the west at least, of finding a format which will appeal across age-groups, without becoming bland.

3. Return to RW inside the stadium. He introduces Cliff Barrows who in turn welcomes the global audience and invites them to participate in a welcoming ritual, which clearly worked in Puerto Rico and indeed at a large secular venue like the Shaftesbury Theatre,¹⁰ but seemed entirely out of place in a suburban British church context. Barrows is followed each night by a contemporary Christian singer – respectively Steve Green, Gary Valenciano, Michael W. Smith – on a plain set with a plant backdrop. On two of the three evenings the octogenarian bass, George Beverly Shea, then sang.

4. After the song, a shot of the audience and an immediate move to Graham on the podium.

⁹ E.g. Leicester Venue which saw the highest level of response apart from the Shaftesbury Theatre (Mark Greene Letter to M. Rowlandson [MR], 7 April 1995).

¹⁰ Source: MR.

Interestingly, Graham's entrance is startlingly simple. He is given no verbal, visual or musical introduction whatsoever. He simply appears. It is clear, however, that the programme is leading us to his appearance. RW refers to him in his remarks, the warm-up film features his picture if not his voice, and at least one of the celebrities in each film commends him. The emphasis throughout, however, is not on the man or his credentials but on the message he will bring. So RW on the third evening:

Discover the most exciting possibility that you've ever experienced. The one person who can bring you the peace and joy you've been looking for all your life... Tonight you're about to discover who he is and how he can change your life forever.

And then former US President Jimmy Carter:

Real peace is found through a relationship with our Creator. In a few minutes you'll hear Billy Graham speak about how you can find real peace. I encourage you to seriously consider the message you're about to hear.

5. After Graham's invitation at Puerto Rico, instructions from Cliff Barrows to those watching by satellite. Then a return to Graham who prays. Close of programme.

III. TECHNOLOGY AND THE SERMON EVENT

The sheer complexity of the technological challenge presented by Global Mission may at first seem irrelevant to the impact on the audiences of the sermons themselves, but the BGEA used the enormous reach of the broadcasts to create a sense of event both in promoting the mission to the church worldwide¹¹ and positioning the mission to Christian and secular media. In itself, this generated an implicit sense of the transcultural, global relevance of the Gospel and perhaps for participants a sense of privilege at being involved in such an event. As with *Live Aid*, on this night the individual involved might feel that they were experiencing what a billion people round the world were experiencing, that they were part of something much bigger than

¹¹ Cf. e.g., *Media Update*, BGEA, Vol. 1, and UK Global mission press releases with crossheads like: 'Biggest Satellite Transmission Ever' and '1 Billion - Total Audience'.

themselves. This sense of the global reach of the mission, and therefore of the global interest in the message, is reinforced not simply by Graham in some parts of his sermons (e.g. S1 and S3), but also by the 25-minute warm-up programme, as well as by the introductions given by RW which preceded the sermons.

Interestingly, satellite venues have historically recorded a higher percentage response than those venues where Graham is physically present. A number of factors might account for the difference – the possibility, for example, that 'live' venues have a higher percentage of already committed Christians who have come to hear Graham out of personal interest. The BGEA's own assessment includes the observation that the satellite venues are darkened to improve image quality and use big screens which project a large close-up image of Graham's head and shoulders. This has two effects. One: Graham is simply much bigger than in a live venue where he will appear as a distant, small figure. In a satellite venue you can see his eyes, and, as such, non-verbal communication may play a greater role. Two: there is less visual distraction because the satellite picture only shows Graham. Combined with a darkened venue, this works to minimise distraction from other members of the audience. The event becomes more focused. Technology in this case has worked to enhance the effectiveness of the message.

Similarly, common sense might suggest that waiting for a translation inevitably diminishes the impact of the message. Indeed, Derek Tidball, Head of Home Mission for the Baptist Union at the time, remarked that it is almost impossible to persuade a British pastor that an event involving sequential translation will work. Nevertheless, there is no statistical evidence that response is reduced. Graham, as we shall see, makes the genre work for him.

The camera work and the editing of the warm-up programmes were technically sophisticated – in both pre- and post-production – but the presentation of Graham himself could hardly be plainer. The backdrop is the crowd with no hint of a logo or a banner. The camera remains static throughout, there are no extreme close-ups, no cross-fades between cameras, no close-ups of faces in the audience. The only variation during the main body of the sermon is a very occasional move out to show the interpreter on the podium with Graham or to show a large section of the audience. The focus is on Graham. The assumption is that he, and what he has to say, have the power to hold the audience for the full length of the sermon.

The sense of event generated by the sheer size of the mission is further enhanced by the reputation of Graham himself. Gallup research records him as being in the top 'ten most admired men in the world' 35 times in the last 40 years.¹² Despite the scandals surrounding other famous evangelists, and the vigorous scrutiny of Graham and his organisation, he has emerged as scrupulously ethical in financial and personal morality.¹³ Indeed, this consistency of private and public persona was used as a copy point in the UK national advertising,¹⁴ at a time in British public life when there had been a series of cases of declining morality among royalty and parliamentary figures. Like other 'star texts',¹⁵ Graham is 'read' by his audience through the lens of what they have seen, heard and read previously – factors which differ markedly from individual to individual. Graham is probably, like Frank Sinatra, a global post-war icon – of interest, even if not of intense interest, to many not particularly partial to his material. Graham, however, never uses his reputation as a credential, although he is aware that a strong reputation, or in his terms a 'holy life', adds authority to his message among his non-Christian audience:

Never forget we are to communicate the gospel by a *holy life*. This is essential. Our world is looking primarily for men and women of integrity, communicators who back up their ministry with their lives. Your preaching emerges out of what you are.¹⁶

Haddon Robinson concurs:

These days, if we want credibility in the pulpit, genuine character has to come through.¹⁷

12 Quoted in the 1995 BGEA Global Mission Press Pack.

13 Cf. e.g., James Morris, *The Preachers* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1973), 377: 'Without doubt Billy Graham is widely considered the epitome of morality. His life is an open book, and there has never been a hint of scandal about his personal life.'

14 Cf. London Underground 16 sheet poster campaign and general public A5 flyers: 'And a man of integrity, whose own life matches his message of significance and hope.'

15 Cf. B. Longhurst, *Popular Music and Society* (London: Polity, 1995), 192.

16 Billy Graham, 'Billy Graham on What He Does Best', *Christianity Today* 27, 13 (2 September 1983), 31. His italics.

17 Haddon Robinson, 'What Authority Does a Preacher Have Anymore?', in Stuart Briscoe, Bill Hybels, Haddon Robinson, *Mastering Contemporary Preaching* (Leicester: IVP, 1989), 25.

For non-Christians in western countries the sense of event is increased by the use of advertising, limited in volume as it usually is.¹⁸ This is the case even though, as BGEA documents reveal, the primary role of advertising is to encourage Christians to invite their non-Christian friends. Advertising acts as a reminder of the event, a platform for invitations and a potential talking-point between Christians and non-Christians.¹⁹ Advertising puts the event in the public arena.

The fact that most attendees are invited by a friend increases the sense of a distinct and unusual event – how often would they be invited to other public events? The unusualness of this as a social occasion is increased, in Britain at least, by the church location of the majority of venues and on arrival by the disjunction between a hi-tech event taking place in surroundings which are predominantly pre-war, at the earliest. This is alien territory and perhaps for some increases the risk in going and the initial unease of being present.

In terms of an overall theology of communication, crusades have been criticised as impersonal, mass evangelism. In reality, the BGEA's insistence on working with local churches has reduced this significantly. 88% of the people who go forward have come with a friend.²⁰ In other words, although Graham may be a privileged, relatively rich, white, western male, speaking through a hi-tech medium, the female Rwandan refugee probably goes to the Goma mission with someone like herself – someone black, homeless, poor and Hutu. The Gospel is personalised by the friend. Similarly, whilst Graham makes the invitation, it is local people who counsel in local dialects and it is to local churches that respondents are referred. Graham's crusades are, in effect, community church events that use an itinerant preacher – a mission is only available at the express request of local churches, is arranged and publicised by local churches and followed up by local churches. This is, to use RW's words, 'personal evangelism on a mass scale.'²¹ Indeed, BGEA research reveals that a person who goes forward at a Billy Graham mission has had, on average, 31 significant prior contacts with the Gospel.²² Graham may

18 Media spend on UK poster and national print advertising in 1995 was under £80K but valued at circa £120K due to astute late buying. Nevertheless, a modest budget which generated strong and positive response. Source: MR.

19 Global Mission Advertising Strategy, 23 January 1995 and BGEA UK 1989 Advertising Campaign Briefing Document, dated September 1988.

20 Source: RW New York Interview.

21 RW New York Interview.

22 Source: RW New York Interview.

be used to convert some people who are hearing the Gospel for the first time, but the majority have been exposed to the message.

IV. PREPARING TO PREACH: HOMILETICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY

How did Graham prepare to preach to all nations?

Graham sought a lot of advice from a lot of people and was tempted to prepare new messages but went back to his old ones and tried to think them through in terms of international illustration.²³

He was given four main goals:²⁴

- Keep it simple.
- Recognise you are dealing with biblically illiterate people.
- Be repetitive.
- Make more use of stories, since 'outside the western world people think in terms of stories, not points'.

All four relate to considerations of audience. The first three are familiar from Graham's own prior writings²⁵ and addresses.²⁶ RW elaborated on the theme of simplicity for theological, as well as communication, reasons: the mind of the non-Christian is darkened by sin, as well as unfamiliar with biblical concepts and stories.²⁷

The point about story needs expansion. Graham has, after all, long been known for his use of stories. The thrust here may have more to do with an understanding of story as *being* the point, not simply illustrating the point. So, for example, Banks, writing on narrative exegesis:

While interest in stories has always been part of pedagogy and homiletics, mostly it has been their secondary illustrative

23 RW Telephone Interview.

24 RW Telephone Interview.

25 Graham, 'Billy Graham on What He Does Best'.

26 Billy Graham, 'Presenting the Gospel with Passion and Urgency' (Chelmsford: Evangelical Films, 1995).

27 RW Telephone Interview.

character that has been discussed rather than their integral or elemental character.²⁸

The story in many non-western contexts is 'elemental', not merely illustrative – not a horse for a rider but rider and horse together. Furthermore, in Africa, for example, the story is a culturally appropriate way 'to instruct, socialize, confront and direct'.²⁹ Whether this understanding informed Graham's use of story is not clear, and it would require further research both to clarify intention and also to demonstrate that there was some difference in content and delivery from his traditional use of stories.

In sum, Graham seems to have made few adjustments to his habitual strategy. An analysis of the sermons themselves shows that his approach is direct, with a predominant use of the active voice and no signs of any attempt to shift to a more indirect style and a greater use of the passive voice as might have been judged with Elmer³⁰ to be theoretically more appropriate for non-western audiences.

Graham's *homiletical* preparation did not differ greatly. However, as Williams said, and Lloyd-Jones³¹ might echo:

What is most important is not homiletical but spiritual preparation.³²

Williams went on to describe Graham's preparation:

Graham spent four weeks isolated, just doing spiritual battle... on spiritual retreat, emerging very rarely, on his knees before God, wrestling with his own life, asking God to increase his conviction of the authority of the Word of God... asking the Lord for renewed compassion for people and a new passion to preach... To preach with freshness, as if it's the first time. To preach with passion, as if it's the last time. You only get that from time with the Lord.³³

28 Robert J. Banks, 'Narrative Exegesis', in Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Leicester: IVP, 1992), 570.

29 See Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1993), 45-46, 99-100.

30 Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Conflict*, 45-46, 51.

31 Cf. e.g., Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching*, 169, 'Prayer is vital to the life of the preacher.'

32 RW Telephone Interview.

33 RW Telephone Interview.

What is remarkable here is not the basic points that emerge – personal holiness, the authority of the Word of God, compassion for people, passion – these are familiar from the writings of many teachers on preaching.³⁴ Rather, it is the realisation that someone so experienced has found no short-cuts; someone apparently so spiritually mature has still to wrestle with his own life; someone who has preached on the basis of the authority of the Bible for fifty years still needs to ask God to increase his conviction of its authority; someone who is well known for the generous way he treats individuals,³⁵ and who has given his life to bring people to relationship with God,³⁶ must still ask God for compassion for them. Nothing is taken for granted. Here then, in Graham's humility, as Richard Bewes pointed out, is perhaps a key to his success.³⁷ It is a theme we will return to later.

V. THE SERMONS: A SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Overall, what the analysis reveals is a sermon style which breaks as many rules of rhetoric as it observes. Graham is effective in eliciting public response but his is hardly the well-honed rhetoric of a master orator or the work of a speaker whose every word and gesture is polished by an eloquence of speech writers, spin doctors and acting coaches.

Theologically, Graham's sermons sit within the conservative evangelical tradition but seek to avoid denominational distinctives that might lead to losing the support of any major denomination.³⁸ Hence, for example, Graham does not cite baptism as a necessary step following conversion, which many denominations would see as an essential element in the process.

34 Cf. e.g., Stott, *I Believe in Preaching*. On personal holiness, 265-66; Scripture, 96-98; compassion, 313; passion, 273-74.

35 Cf. e.g., Mark Greene, 'The Heart of the Man', in *LBC Review* (Autumn 1995), 4 and confirmed in conversation with MR, National Co-ordinator of Global Mission UK, and author of *Life with Billy* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994), and of *I'm going to ask you...*, a book on the impact that Graham has had on a number of people, to be published by Hodder & Stoughton in 1997.

36 Cf. Billy Graham World Television Series April 1996 Profile which begins with his personal affirmation: 'My one purpose in life is to help people find a personal relationship with God, which I believe comes through knowing Christ.'

37 Cf. Richard Bewes, quoted in Greene, 'Heart of the Man', 4.

38 See e.g., Billy Graham, *Peace with God* (New York: Cardinal, 1955), Preface, vii and viii, on denominational distinctives versus Christian essentials.

Graham's focus is on the cross, on the necessity of putting one's trust in Christ as the only route to salvation.³⁹ He makes it clear that he believes in hell, that there is something vital at stake for his listeners, a choice to be made, but his emphasis is on heaven. Indeed, his sermons are essentially benefit-oriented. That is, they focus on how the love and power of Christ can transform the individual's life now, as well as for eternity:

The message in this book can change your life, it can help you as you face your daily problems. It can help you in your home, it can change the direction of your life. (S1)

In Buttrick's terms, Graham offers a new beginning to our story,⁴⁰ of God-with-us all along, and the possibility of a different ending to our story than the one we now envisage.⁴¹ This is not propositional preaching but, with Loscalzo, 'transformational preaching', answering the question: how will your life be different if you take this text seriously?⁴²

Graham may assert the emptiness of alternatives to Christ – materialism, Hinduism⁴³ (implicitly rather than explicitly)⁴⁴ – but these alternatives are shown to be ineffective solutions rather than philosophically bankrupt. They don't work. Indeed, Graham proclaims rather than engages in apologetics.⁴⁵ He does not invoke the fulfilment of prophecy, nor show the inconsistencies within the Muslim understanding of a monadic deity; rather he asserts the truth of Christ and him crucified and raised from the dead. He does not try to prove theological points or the authority of Scripture; rather he speaks as one for whom these have been proven beyond doubt. For example, in S1 he establishes his belief in the authority of the Bible in two sentences at the beginning and then goes on to use the phrases 'the Bible teaches', 'the Bible says' or 'in the Bible' thirty times, which does not include

39 Cf. S1: 'We're not ready to give our lives to Christ and trust him alone for our salvation.'

40 Cf. Buttrick, *Homiletic*, 11.

41 Cf. Buttrick, *Homiletic*, 12.

42 Loscalzo, *Evangelistic Preaching*, 26.

43 Cf. S3: 'There's no room for an endless cycle of returning to the earth until we get it all right.'

44 Graham never names other religions, seeking perhaps to focus on issues rather than on labels, as well as wanting to avoid unnecessary controversy.

45 True in his sermons, but in his writing he is prepared to make direct comparisons. Cf. e.g., *Peace with God*, 16 on the Bible versus the holy books of other religions.

occasions when he quotes biblical texts but does not use the word 'Bible'.

If, then, the offer is of a transformed life, the rhetorical focus is on clarifying the decision that needs to be made to enjoy it.

In S3, for example, the thrust of the message is simple:

- Your soul is infinitely valuable.
- You are going to die but your soul won't.
- Your soul, the essential you, is going to end up in heaven or hell.
- God loves you and wants you to go to heaven.
- Where are you going?
- There's only one way to heaven – through Christ.
- Come to Christ tonight.

This focus on the transformed life and on the urgency of decision necessary is inherent in the mission's slogan, *The Time is Now*, and reinforced in the warm-up programme:

Tonight consider the alternative to your years of searching, consider the truth of God's love and what it can do to change your circumstances.⁴⁶

Later the lyrics of one song are:

Now is the time for a change of heart.

And Elizabeth Dole says:

My hope and prayer is that the next few minutes with Billy Graham will be a life-changing experience for you.

Everything works both to clarify the transforming power of the Gospel and to bring the individual to a point where he or she can decide for Christ. However, to say that this is the overall and conscious intent of the evenings is not also to suggest that the sermons themselves are sharply honed to the point of being formulaic or even particularly well-written.

Structurally the four sermons follow a similar pattern:

⁴⁶ RW, Evening Mission 2.

1. A general welcome.
2. A verse of Scripture.
3. A shift into an illustration that presents a non-believer's perspective:
 - S1 – John 3:16 – God's love – the atheist wife of a Soviet leader.
 - S2 – John 6:48 – bread, followed by types of staple diet round the world.
 - S3 – Mark 8:36 – the value of the soul, followed by Kurt Cobain's suicide.
 - S4 – Galatians 6:14 – Paul's glorying in the cross, followed by the ornamental, secular use of the cross.
4. A series of points related to the introductory theme. For example:

S3: Why is your soul valuable?

1. It is permanent.
2. God loves your soul.
3. A huge price was paid for it.

As such, Graham tends to use a simple 'list structure',⁴⁷ making a series of points relating to the theme or question he has posed.

5. Invitation.
6. Prayer for those who have come forward.

Graham makes little attempt to use structure to facilitate understanding. There are no 'advance organisers',⁴⁸ no neat sectional form, no attempt to link the main points with obvious mnemonics, nor indeed does he summarise one section before moving on to the next. Rather he tends to run sections into each another:

He will change the direction of your life, he will give you assurance that when you die you're going to heaven with him,

⁴⁷ James Rye, *The Communicator's Craft* (Leicester: IVP, 1993), 44.

⁴⁸ Cf. Rye, *Craft*, 33.

and secondly, the soul is valuable because of God's concern, God's love for your soul. (S2)

The 'and secondly' is not strictly a *sequitur* from the main point of the previous section which is the permanence of the soul. Another speaker might have ended the section with a summary sentence like this:

So the soul is permanent. It is immortal. It's never going to die.
And secondly, it is...

Graham rarely does this, perhaps because he has usually already repeated the main point several times. The speed of the move into a new point is reinforced by his use of pace and tone of voice. In the above example, he executes the shift without pause or any heavy shift in vocal tone. In sum, he doesn't allow his audience to rest at these points of transition but carries them forward. The same applies in S2 in the shift to his third point – the price paid for the soul's redemption. A question is posed but with no long pause or heavy emphasis:

Are you in the process of losing your soul today?

This is immediately juxtaposed with a third reason for its value:

The soul is also valuable because of the price paid for its redemption.

This is an interesting method of transition which perhaps avoids formal summations and section introductions because they are opportunities for an audience not so much to rest as to lose interest.

Graham's overall 'connective logic'⁴⁹ often seems weak. Sometimes, against the wisdom of scholars like Buttrick,⁵⁰ he simply enumerates or inserts an 'and'. This is particularly the case in S2 where the sermon could be said to lack focus.

- He establishes a leadership theme early on, but shifts the theme thereafter and never brings it to closure.

49 Cf. Buttrick, *Homiletic*, 70-71.

50 Cf. Buttrick, *Homiletic*, 69-79.

- The Roberto Clementi (a baseball player) example is included with little except local Puerto Rican interest to recommend it; we are not even told if he was a Christian.
- The lack of obvious link to the central theme applies to the closing illustration of the Rwandan orphan, a poignant example, but which raises difficult questions of theodicy at an inappropriate moment in the argument.

The overall mistake in S2 seems to have been to make the attempt to include and comment on all seven 'I am' sayings. What emerges is a sermon that seems to speak more powerfully to Christians about discipleship than to non-Christians about commitment. This is confirmed by the audience response in Puerto Rico where the crowd bursts into affirmatory applause on five occasions after Graham has made points with which Christians would agree, for example:

Jesus is the door. (S2)

As God can bring about birth, he can also bring about resurrection. (S2)

The same phenomenon occurred at London's Shaftesbury Theatre.⁵¹ But did not occur on either of the other two evenings. Indeed, in the UK, this sermon recorded the smallest percentage response⁵² and the lowest number of subsequent requests for video copies.⁵³

Within sections Graham uses a number of structural devices, for example:

- The implicit contrast structure:⁵⁴

He could have gloried in his teaching because he was the greatest teacher in all the world. He could have gloried in his resurrection. He could glory in his future glory because the Bible teaches that he will someday rule the world. Why did Paul say, 'I glory in the cross'? (S4)

51 Source: MR.

52 Source: Global Mission UK Daily Reports to R. Kruse.

53 Source: MR.

54 Cf. Rye, *Craft*, 45.

- A modified chiasitic structure:
 - A. He [Jesus] said: 'I am the door.' Now every house and every building has an entrance.
 - B. The kingdom of God also has an entrance.
 - C. But only one.
 - B'. One door to the kingdom of God.
 - A'. What is it? Jesus is the door. (S2)

Clearly there is skill in Graham's style and use of repetition. But there is also a lack of clarity in some sections caused by the fact that some sentences do not flow logically one from another. The shift in S3 from 'the soul is the real you' to 'everyday, people debate the worth of thousands of things' is difficult to follow on first hearing. Similarly, there are occasions when logically disconnected sentences find their way into a paragraph and break the flow of thought:

And it's transmitted to nearly 3,000 locations in 185 countries. Cliff Barrows has already welcomed you and I just want to welcome you also. In South Africa for example, over 300 missions are organised... (S2)

The second sentence is redundant: Graham opens his sermon by welcoming people, and this second welcome interrupts his focus on the mission's reach, making it more difficult to remember what 'for example' refers to.

Later in the same sermon, he closes a section on 'going in the right door' by introducing a new idea:

Jesus says that anyone that climbs in by some other way is a thief and a robber.

He then immediately moves on to the next point, leaving the hearer, in my view, puzzled as to the precise relevance of the reference to the thief. Similarly in S3, he introduces three quite separate trains of thought in six sentences, quite against the grain of what has preceded:

Even if you get it all, which you can't, it doesn't bring peace and joy and happiness. Only Christ can do that. What about the time of trouble? And trouble comes and we many times need help. But more important than losing in this life, you lose

in the life to come. The Bible teaches that hell is a terrible place... (S3)

Most of these sorts of 'mistakes' would have been caught by a sermon coach, but Graham doesn't have one. The sermons were not examined by a team beforehand. Indeed, Graham only told his team the theme of the evening sermon during the morning of the same day,⁵⁵ despite the fact that this left his video team unable to finalise the compilation of the warm-up programmes until then. The sermon retained its priority.

If the structure of Graham's text is flawed, this is offset by his ability to make his audience feel included. He uses a whole range of methods. A high number of rhetorical questions:

	S1	S2	S3	S4
No. of rhetorical questions	28	12	17	10

Some pointed: 'What about you?' Some enquiring: 'Have you ever thought about that?'

Graham also uses the device of imagining his hearer's actions or words in the second person:

You look at this way of life, and that way of life, and you say, 'that's attractive'... (S2)

You say, 'It's a long way down there.' (S4)

Indeed, within his sermons he uses the second person personal and reflexive pronouns and possessive adjectives a great deal. The words 'you', 'your/s', 'yourselves' occur 200 times in S1, 194 times in S2, 212 times in S3, 162 times in S4. Graham's use of 'you' varies from the impersonal substitute for the pronominal use of 'one' meaning 'we':

You can't see it. You can't reach it with a surgeon's knife, but that doesn't mean that our soul isn't real.

to a substitute for the passive:

You can't kill the soul. (S3)

⁵⁵ Source: RW Telephone Interview.

But the majority of his usage is of the simple, designatory form.

Similarly, he uses the first person imperative as an inclusive device:

Let's think about the cross. (S4)

Graham also vocalises his listeners' imagined words in the first person:

I'm going to ask that no one leave the stadium now but get up out of your seat and say, 'Today, I want Christ in my heart. I want to know he's forgiven my sin. I want that peace and the joy in my heart. I want a new life. I want to walk a new road. I want to know that Christ is in my heart.' (S4)

The listener is drawn in to the flow of the argument, asked to be a participant.

This inclusiveness is also reflected in his use of examples and illustrations. They are geographically diverse and ethnically inclusive, including not only references to people from all over the world⁵⁶ but citing specific countries and regions:

	S1	S2	S3	S4
Countries/regions mentioned	15	11	9	10

Similarly, he includes examples of people in a variety of different types of spiritual states:

- The person in the church who is not a Christian – 'some of you belong to a church' (S2); 'You might have been confirmed' (S3); a British bishop who didn't know Christ (S4).

The inclusion of this group is not surprising given that historically, as Bruce reports, they represent 60% of 'decisions' recorded.⁵⁷

- The successful for whom success has not brought peace – the famous newspaper columnist (S2), Kurt Cobain and Solomon (S3), and Steven Tyler (Aerosmith) (S4).

⁵⁶ Cf. S2: 'All of you around the world'; S3: 'We come from many cultures, many ethnic backgrounds'; S4: 'People write to us from all over the world.'

⁵⁷ Steve Bruce, *Pray TV* (London: Routledge, 1990), 116.

Implicitly, they are contrasted with the successful figures in the warm-up films who have found peace and joy through Christ.

- The seeker, the lonely, the empty – S2: 'You're like a blind man'; or 'He told about his feelings of emptiness and lostness and helplessness'.

Graham's focus here conforms to the main points of his recent teaching on audience,⁵⁸ where he sees the major issues facing people as emptiness, loneliness, guilt, fear of death and insecurity. It is to these diseases that the Gospel offers an answer.

The sermons are you-focused but not self-righteous. His use of 'I/me/my' referring to himself is low but he does use 'we' often and cites personal examples to include himself as one who needed and needs Christ. For example:

And every person in this audience has broken those commandments, including Billy Graham. And the Bible says if you've broken one of them, you've broken them all and that's called sin, and no sinner is ever going to get to heaven except by the grace of God. (S1)

Beyond that, the inclusion of autobiographical detail personalises the sermon further – his mother scrubbing his ears (S1), his wife showing him magazines (S4), their three sheep (S4), the Rwandan orphan story his son told him (S2), his own testimony (S3), his sister's polio (S2), the trip to Australia when he shared a room with Cliff Barrows (S3) (what kind of superstar shares a room!). As an audience we feel as if we are getting to know him and that in turn increases empathy.

That said, Graham never rests his case on his own authority but, as we have seen, on the Bible, as the basis of his sermons and the measure of truth to which he turns.

What other major characteristics of Graham's rhetoric can we discern? In drawing this section to a close, we focus on the following six.

1. Language

Graham's use of language is simple. There are almost no abstract nouns, and technical religious terms come almost exclusively from

⁵⁸ Graham, 'Presenting the Gospel with Passion and Urgency'.

Bible quotations. That said, he cites the Authorised Version when quoting from the Bible. This goes against received wisdom which would argue for a contemporary version for contemporary humankind. Doesn't using an old version reinforce prejudice that the Bible and Christianity are out of date and incomprehensible? How many under 30s would understand at first hearing the old usage of 'save' to mean 'except' or the use of 'unto' in Galatians 6:14?

But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the Lord was crucified unto me and I unto the world.

Furthermore, in two of the sermons Graham asks his audience to turn to the Bible, a potentially alienating request since very few non-Christians will have brought a Bible with them or, if they had, would know where to find Galatians.

2. Stories and illustrations

Graham is on the whole a fine story-teller and his best stories do seem to have the power to form 'theological consciousness'.⁵⁹ A strong example in the Global Mission sermons is the juggler in S3. Here there is a skilful use of anticipation to generate suspense, a surprising twist in the tale, and a mastery of timing and gesture in delivery. The point makes itself and Graham deftly turns the story on his audience by asking them to identify with the juggler:

Are you gambling with your soul? (S3)

The same mastery of suspense can be seen in the airline crash analogy (S3) or the story of the non-believing bishop (S4). Graham slowly builds up the bishop's credentials, he takes us into the study, gives us a cup of tea, and so on. The bishop's problem, a problem we anticipate, is delayed for as long as possible:

I want to really know Christ, and I want you to tell me how I can know him.

Similarly, his vivid personification of sin simply and dramatically turns it from an abstract concept into a living force:

⁵⁹ Cf. Buttrick, *Homiletic*, 334-35.

Sin stands over you with a whip. It gives you an order. You know it's wrong but you do it anyway. (S4)

Graham's metaphors, similes and illustrations are often vivid, concrete, simple and relevant internationally:

I want to talk about your soul. You can't see it. You can't reach it with a surgeon's knife. (S3)

And after a while you may have a dead conscience. It's like a frog. You can take a frog and put him in hot water and he will jump out. Put him in cold water and gradually heat the water and you can boil him. (S4)

Graham takes his examples from the contemporary world, from his own experience and from the Bible. He very rarely uses a quote or an example from before the twentieth century,⁶⁰ a strategy to which Hybels would give assent.⁶¹ This contributes to the sense of authenticity, freshness and contemporary relevance of the message.

3. Grammar and sentence structure

Grammatically, most of the sentences are simple and relatively short. There are few instances of the multiple use of adjectives or of parallel clause construction.⁶² In this spare use of qualification and simple sentence structure he preserves the 'orality' of the address. This also manifests itself in a certain amount of clearly extemporary expression and gesture. For example, hearing his interpreter use the Spanish word 'loco' he remarks: 'I know what that means' (S2). Similarly, on one occasion he looks at his watch. For most sermon critics this would be seen as a mistake – it makes the audience time-conscious. In this case, it also shows that Graham is time-conscious, that he is wondering if he is behind the clock, perhaps because he has included more than he intended.

Graham's sentences are not only simple, they are also short. This may have been to accommodate the necessity of sequential translation

⁶⁰ Although S2 does include a quote from St Augustine.

⁶¹ Cf. Bill Hybels, 'Speaking to the Secularized Mind', in Briscoe, Hybels, Robinson, *Mastering Contemporary Preaching*, 36.

⁶² But they do occur. Cf. S3: 'One moment he was a criminal, one moment he was on his way to hell, one moment he was suffering terribly on the cross, and he turns to Jesus.'

into multiple languages but does seem to be characteristic of his preaching⁶³ and writing,⁶⁴ and adds a sense of directness, immediacy and authority to the sermon. The staccato brevity of some of his sentences in turn gives an uncompromising edge to some of his statements.

It's the greatest act of faith in the Bible. (S4)

He says of the believing thief on the cross. At the time you believe it. Only later, if ever, do you wonder whether Abraham or some other historical figure might lay claim to such an accolade. The point, however, has been made. Similarly, there is an invigorating, insightful conciseness to some of his statements. For example:

Now we put a higher value on fish than we do on people. (S3)

In delivery, he rarely speaks more than ten words before allowing the interpreter to translate. This facilitates understanding, ensures that the audience 'wait time' is short and the anticipation of the next thought high. It also ensures that he has something to say in every ten word section. Even with the stricture of translation, he is able to use the gaps to great effect:

Many of you have been groping your way through life.
(Translation)
You're like a blind man. (Translation)
You stumble. (Translation)
You falter. (Translation)
Like a man in darkness. (Translation) (S2)

Similarly, despite the interval generated by the translation he can still use pause as a powerful device:

He told about his feelings of emptiness, (Translation)
and loneliness, (Translation)
and helplessness. (Translation)
With Christ, (Translation)... Pause
you can live life to the fullest 'til you die. (Translation) (S2)

63 Cf. e.g., the preview tape of the April 1996 Sky broadcast 'Starting Over'.
64 Cf. e.g., Graham, *Peace with God*.

Indeed, the sequential translation actually seems to increase rather than dissipate suspense. Graham has to stop. He has to make his audience wait. And they know it. It is inevitable, and so the pause enhances suspense but is not perceived as manipulative, which no doubt it would be if Graham used it to anything like the extent the translation made necessary in a non-translation context. As such, the satellite genre works to enhance Graham's message.

4. Voice

Graham has a strong, penetrative but not irritating voice. It is by no means monotonous, but the range of volume and pace is relatively narrow. He gains variety and interest from variation in tone and inflection, though there is a marked lack of intense emotion or melodrama, despite the nature of the issues he is discussing. In the invitations there is no hint of pleading:

I'm going to ask you to do something...

is not a demand and is spoken in a matter-of-fact way. The tone seems respectful not pressuring, purposeful but not overwhelming, consistent with a man who has spent a month praying that God would give him compassion for his audience. Despite the repetitions, he is not cajoling but rather exhortatory, beckoning rather than imperious. There is, however, a sense of urgency. This is not just a function of language – the references to 'tonight', to 'now', to the importance of the decision – but also of the rhythm of his speech and perhaps of a natural outworking of his own conviction about the implications of the Gospel: his listeners stand on the edge of eternity.

5. Dress, stance and gesture

Graham is neatly and slightly formally dressed. Dark jackets and light shirts set off both his flesh tones and his white hair, which in itself adds a distinguished air. Graham is tall and his overall stance is erect though not rigid. Even at 76 he was able to move with fluidity, though never stepping to the left or right. He uses his hands a great deal but his movement is not extravagant. His gestures are crisp. They stop, rather than drift away: the finger is held high, the fist is clenched and is held in mid-air.

His adaptation to the sequential translation medium in which he operates is exemplary. In the early sections of the sermons his head

might go down to his notes after he has finished a sentence or phrase. However, he almost always raises it again before the interpreter finishes, recapturing his audience's attention and generating anticipation. In some of the centre sections of the sermons he maintains stance, gesture and eye contact not only while he is speaking but during the interpretation as well. This is compelling to watch, maintaining the emotional intensity and indeed the audience's concentration, despite the pause.

6. The peak and delaying it

Graham's sermons all have a clear and consistent peak.⁶⁵ He is moving towards the moment when he will ask people to come forward and make a public commitment to Christ. In classic rhetoric this might demand devices that build to a climax, that summarise the arguments so as to render a decision for Christ logically inevitable or that create an emotional atmosphere which would reduce resistance. In fact, none of these devices are used in the Puerto Rico sermons.

The appeals are direct:

Now what about you? I'm going to ask you to do something that we've seen hundreds of people do... (S4)

This often works to legitimate the potential convert's decision by referring to others who have made it in similar circumstances, a legitimacy which in S2, for example, had already been established in Graham's introductory references to the positive response to the previous evening's mission.

Graham spends a great deal of time on the invitation but perhaps more significantly he tends to anticipate it early in each sermon, not simply in rhetorical questions but in some sermons by seeming to be actually on the brink of asking people to come forward well before he does so. Here is an extract from S2, on the second page of a five page address.

The permanent everlasting decision must be made now. The loss of your soul is tragic because death renders it permanent. There's no second chance. And that's why it's important for you to make that commitment tonight to Jesus Christ. (S2)

⁶⁵ For the concept of 'peak', see Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (London: SPCK, 1989), 244-45.

Or in S3, page 3 of 5:

Which road are you on? Tonight you once again stand at the crossroad. You have another chance to make a choice. Make it tonight. (S3)

This may seem to be manipulative but is perhaps better viewed as simply ensuring that his listeners have time to consider what is at stake before the question is finally posed.⁶⁶ It is, nevertheless, effective. RW said that this explicit anticipation of the decision that will be called for is the single factor he detected which increased response to Graham's sermons.⁶⁷ This is not a surprising finding but nevertheless an interesting one, given the fact most people in the west who attend a Graham crusade would be aware that evangelism is his business, that calling people to commitment is a key component of the evening. In the terms of discourse analysis, Graham is delaying the peak,⁶⁸ a standard and effective method of generating anticipation.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

What, then, are we to make of Graham's sermons? Clearly they are not models of homiletical craft. And that is perhaps why few choose to study them. There is, however, much to learn: their inclusiveness, the simplicity of language, the colour and conciseness of his metaphors, the power of some of his stories to form theological consciousness. Indeed, in terms of Craddock's criteria,⁶⁹ Graham does well: there is usually unity of theme and much material that the audience can 'nod' in agreement at before being 'shocked' into self-questioning. Graham does present the human condition with genuine insight, even if long-standing Christians are familiar with the conclusions. He does work from the specific out to the general – from Cobain out to a more general sense of emptiness. He does use anticipation well and has the ability to generate a sense of intimacy. And he does tell stories with 'emotional restraint and an economy of words'.⁷⁰ That said, we are perhaps still left with a mystery. Neither the dynamics of the overall events nor the sermons explain Graham's extraordinary appeal and

⁶⁶ Cf. e.g., Hybels, 'Secularized', 37: on 'Responses that give time and freedom'.

⁶⁷ RW Telephone Interview.

⁶⁸ Cf. Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics*, 244-45.

⁶⁹ Craddock, *Preaching*, 153-69: 'Qualities to be sought in the sermon'.

⁷⁰ Craddock, *Preaching*, 164.

efficacy. For the confessing community, there is the clear conviction that Graham is anointed, that, as MR put it:

I could preach the same sermon, using the same words and the same gestures, and nothing would happen. He is anointed.⁷¹

Similarly, for the BGEA there is no great secret. As RW put it:

We don't have any special secret. People ask me and there isn't one. I just keep telling people the same thing. If people pray, if the local church does its job and invites people that they have prayed for, then, in his grace, God moves.⁷²

In communication terms, perhaps the answer lies in the man not the words, which are, after all, just 7% of the total message.⁷³ Graham is no actor but he is, to many people, a riveting speaker. Perhaps, through voice tone and inflection, through gesture and stance, Graham succeeds in communicating at a non-propositional level the total conviction of his beliefs.

Although I would never wish to cut back on the teaching of homiletic technique or exegetical analysis, it is, nevertheless, a *person* who preaches. And this particular person spent a month in spiritual preparation. Perhaps, though it is unmeasurable and unprovable, this is indeed the source of Graham's authority, self-effacing and humble though he is; the source of a compassion that people sense in his very lack of manipulative wiles and pyrotechnic oratory; the source of a conviction that always points away from himself.

James Morris described Graham 'as a person who can be believed. In a world that seems to have lost its moorings for many people, a world bursting with confidence men, charlatans, false advertising and law suits, his simple but forthright message is eminently believable'.⁷⁴

Graham certainly believes it. And therein, in tandem with the Holy Spirit, lies the power of his preaching.

71 MR Telephone Interview.

72 RW Telephone Interview.

73 So, e.g., RW argued in the Telephone Interview.

74 Morris, *The Preachers*, 376.

PREDESTINATION, PAULINE AND ISLAMIC: A STUDY IN CONTRASTS¹

COLIN SEDGWICK

Islam, at least as popularly viewed, is among the most deterministic of religious systems. Indeed, its determinism seems sometimes so pronounced as to justify the term 'fatalism'. Guillaume, in his standard work, cannot resist a wry note in commenting on this:

When a European reads the Qur'an text, 'Place your reliance on God', on the windscreen of a motor-bus which is driven full speed round a hair-pin bend with a precipice on the near side he is only too ready, if he is a religious man, to obey the injunction; but at the same time he wishes the driver would exercise common prudence. But the attitude of the local population is characteristic of Islam, the religion of complete and absolute resignation to what is believed to be the will of Allah.²

Rippin and Knappert likewise emphasise this characteristic of 'popular' (as opposed to scholarly) Islam:

Since nothing exists which God did not create and nothing happens which he does not do, people have no option but to follow the direction of God's will. This is the popular philosophy of Islam; not all Islamic scholars agree with it but a vast majority of the common people in Islamic countries do.³

1 This paper grew out of a research study of predestination in the Pauline tradition, with special reference to Ephesians 1. It was found illuminating to survey the Islamic tradition, noted for its predestinarian emphasis, as a foil against which to set Paul's teaching. Given that Ephesians is generally regarded as thoroughly Pauline in character even if not certainly Pauline in authorship, a working assumption is made of authenticity. The paper is presented here with minimal revision. I would like to express my thanks to Dr Peter Riddell and Dr Steve Motyer for their generous help and encouragement in this project.

2 Alfred Guillaume, *Islam* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1956 2nd edn.), 134.

3 Andrew Rippin and Jan Knappert, *Textual Sources for the Study of Islam* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 20.