

## Billy Graham Crusade, Korea '73

David Carlson

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We members of the Seoul Western Center had planned on going to hear evangelist Billy Graham give his final sermon in Seoul, Korea on Sunday afternoon, June 3, 1973. So when Sunday morning rolled around, after church and an impromptu lunch, we set out around 1:45 p.m. in order to arrive at the Yoido Island Plaza where Dr. Graham was to speak at 3:00 p.m. Hal McKenzie (center leader), John Price, Lynne Doerfler, Gary Juarez, Leon Pine, Mike Urbonya, No Myung-Sook, and David Carlson, all trooped down to the nearest bus stop, complete with an ample supply of water, umbrellas, and, of course, cameras with telephoto lenses. After watching several buses pass by, jammed to the point where a sardine would feel crowded, we decided to take a taxi. This was soon accomplished and we were breezing down the streets of Seoul. As we reached the main highway leading to the Plaza, we found the traffic quite congested. Many people apparently, had decided to go on the last day. Our taxi crossed the Han River and was soon approaching the area. Here again, traffic was quite congested and we had to walk the rest of the way. Traipsing across an open field we approached the Plaza and immediately we felt the bustling atmosphere. Thousands upon thousands of people were walking towards the area. We joined the crowd and very soon were walking on the asphalt of the Plaza.

From this position we began taking pictures as we could clearly see the gigantic sign board reading, "I Am The Way, and The Truth, and The Life" in English and Korean. We were able to hear the 6,000 voice choir and see the different platforms and TV cameras. All these thousands of people, some Christians, others perhaps just curious, and many probably just coming to hear a world famous person speak in their native country, were streaming into the large Plaza area.

After saying hello to some Korean Family members whom we recognized, we found a place to sit on the asphalt and got our cameras out and, using the telephoto lenses, scanned the speaker's podium to see what we could see. Dr. Billy Graham was wearing a gray suit but since we were over one-hundred yards away, we could not see much detail. Soon, most people had settled down and the view was open. Several people spoke at the microphone and made various introductory speeches and so forth. The sound system was very efficient and we had no trouble at all in hearing and understanding what was being said.

The weather was clear, although it was a little cloudy, and it was quite warm. We peeled off our jackets and waited for the main event. Several more speakers made introductory remarks. Some spoke in Korean and others in English, which was translated into Korean. One hopeful idea which was mentioned was that there was a fervent hope on the part of those in the crusade that there could soon be a unification of Christianity and that all Christian brothers and sisters could be together as one in heart. We looked around and saw that we were completely hemmed in by the gargantuan crowd, many of whom carried Bibles with them.

Suddenly a familiar voice sounded over the loudspeakers and we found ourselves listening attentively to Dr. Billy Graham. Dr. Graham began with some general remarks praising the work of the officials responsible for the Crusade; the Seoul traffic policemen, the camera crews, etc. He said that this was the largest crowd he had ever spoken to before in his life, and that Korea was surely the world focus of Christianity today.

He began his sermon on the message from John 15:13, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." He mentioned how, when he was in Korea once before, an American soldier had given his life for his friends by falling on a live grenade, thus sacrificing himself. He expounded on the message that God loved man so much that a new word had to be invented to describe this kind of love (Agape love) and that God had sent His only son, Jesus Christ, into the world to be crucified on the cross

for our sins, since we all fall short of the glory of God. Dr. Graham also mentioned that one of the last messages Jesus left before he died was to, "Love one another."

Dr. Graham repeated this three times for emphasis. He said that if one repented of one's sins and asked Christ to come and live in his heart, he could be assured of going to the Kingdom of Heaven, because of the saving grace of God.



*1.1 million people fill avenue leading into Seoul*

Dr. Graham also mentioned some Principled ideas. He stated that God had created man in order that He could have someone to love and receive a loving response from for all eternity. But in the Garden of Eden on earth something happened. He said that women were naturally curious (even his wife, he added), and that Eve also was curious, that she desired wisdom. So she took of the fruit and ate of it. But then she got sick. She took some of the fruit to Adam, and he ate. But he got sick, too. And everyone in the entire human race to this day has this same sickness. This sickness is man's disobedience to God. Dr. Graham said that only by coming to Jesus Christ, the son of God, and accepting him into one's life, can one be assured of God's grace and forgiveness.

Dr. Graham said before his sermon that he wanted everybody to listen to him as though it would be the last sermon he ever gave, and as though it would be the last sermon one ever listened to. He mentioned that Expo-74 was going to happen in Korea and that many young people in Korea were turning to Christ. He called Korea a "spiritual superpower."

All of us of the Seoul Western Center listened to Dr. Graham and appreciated that this world-famous man was directing so much attention to Korea, and that so many people were being "converted" to Christianity. He said that when you become a Christian, you have to give up all your other gods and maybe some friends, but that you would gain others.

Dr. Graham invited anyone who desired to receive Christ to stand up where they were and receive some literature and join in a prayer and then to pray silently for a few minutes. A young Korean man in front of us stood up and did so, and it was interesting to see him follow his convictions, because no one near him took the initiative.

We received some literature and prayed for Dr. Graham and soon a helicopter landed behind the platform where he had spoken to take him away. All of the crowd waved as the helicopter circled three times and then departed for the airport.

Very soon after taking some pictures, we began to walk back, accompanied by a Korean friend whom we'd met there, Mr. Hee-Kwon Lee.

The crowd extended from one side of the huge plaza to the other, numbering over a million people, and we found ourselves: literally being carried along by the crowd. Many people were singing Christian tunes, and occasionally we could see a sign which someone carried, about some church or other. We walked back across the bridge over the Han River and the street was: completely packed with people as far as the eye could see. The crowd gradually dispersed, and we eventually caught a bus home.

Our heartfelt prayers go to Dr. Billy Graham and we hope that someday Unified Family members might speak to crowds such as listened to Dr. Graham, and perhaps even larger. It was truly a big day in Seoul, Korea.