

God and Coca-Cola: Billy Graham in Germany

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I'll tell you tonight the story of two journeys across the Atlantic. They are both loaded with curiosity and spirituality, with diplomacy and hospitality: One is the story of Billy Graham, and the other is my own. Billy Graham crossed the Atlantic for the first time when he came to Europe with "Youth for Christ" after the Second World War. Germany was at that time suffering from its material destruction, but more than that, from its ethical responsibility for the Holocaust and a breakdown of morality. Graham came to Germany in the 1950s and 1960s as a symbol of America's support for the country and of the integration of West German society in the Western World. Billy returned in the 1960s and 1970s with ever new and challenging preaching techniques that increasingly used modern mass media. During his "Euro 1970 Campaign," he used a public viewing system that allowed him to preach to European Christians in 39 different European cities simultaneously for the first time. In the 1980s, Graham first preached in the German Democratic Republic, the separated part of the country often called "East Germany." And finally, he returned to West Germany in 1990 and 1993.

The history of Billy Graham's Crusades in Germany is the story of a cultural clash and a cultural integration at the same time. On the one hand, in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, Graham provoked fiery discussions among German Protestants about appropriate methods for spreading the Gospel and about his message. He also encountered a strong cultural anti-Americanism that inspired the German press to invent the "God and Coca Cola" metaphor. On the other hand, Graham, personifying "the American savior," gave the German population hope. In addition, he became an icon of American popular culture and the Cold War through whom Germans could relate to the Western world. Studying Billy Graham's German crusades helps us to understand processes of Americanization and Westernization in Germany and the role that religion played in Cold War Germany. My thesis is that Graham's campaign in the 1950s and 1960s helped to integrate Germany into the Western world. In the 1970s and 1980s, Graham's campaigns overcame the concepts of Cold War politics and formed a global, media-based religious community that even crossed political boundaries. The story of Billy Graham's crusades in Germany also forms part of the developing relationship between America and Germany after the Second World War. The way Graham was received in Germany tells us about the state of this relationship and about how Germany changed and prospered after its total defeat—thanks to people like Billy Graham.

The story of Billy Graham's German Crusades is also connected to the history of religion in Germany after 1945, which is a story of decline. Church membership in Germany has been constantly dropping since World War II: less than 10 percent of German Protestants go to church on a regular basis. German churches are empty. However, recent German discussions about wearing Muslim headscarves in schools, the struggle to remove the cross as a Christian symbol from secular classrooms, debates about same-sex marriage and an EU-membership for Turkey, of course, point to a society that is deeply religious and Christian. And Billy Graham struck a still-existing chord of religiousness within German society. His campaigns in Germany provide a

window for exploring a German religiousness that does not live behind closed church doors.

After I left Germany to move to the United States, I saw what the problems in the German religious landscape are from an outside perspective: first, a lack of pluralism and competition in the field of religion. The German religious landscape is dominated by two major churches—the Catholic and the Protestant Church—which are closely tied to the state; for example, the state collects taxes for the churches. Second, Germany is caught in a secular discourse: Especially German intellectuals, journalists and sociologists feel that one must choose either modernity or religion, and Germans, for the most part, choose the ideal of a modern, secular society wherein the political and the religious spheres are separate and the disappearance of religion from public discourse is foreseen. It is that landscape that Billy Graham entered again and again and that made his work in Germany difficult, but also important.

Here in the United States, I have learned to understand the dynamics that religious pluralism sets free. I have learned that religion and modernity can indeed live in a prosperous symbiosis. And I have learned that religion and politics are not separate spheres but that religious and political discourses are constantly interwoven: The nation-building of the United States is based on religious metaphors, and the shaping of the West or the European Community is also full of religious connotations. What I have learned here in the U.S. has helped me to understand what Graham accomplished in Germany: His crusades there marked the beginning of a growing acceptance of more modern preaching techniques that continues today. They made it apparent that Germany, too, had a need for religion with a modern face. And Billy Graham's success in Germany testifies to the diversification of the German religious landscape after 1945.

When I first came to the Billy Graham Center Archives, it was through the impressive collection of media material—posters, movies, images—that I realized how evangelicalism adapted to modernity, and how religion developed as an integral part of Western consumer and popular culture and not on the fringes like in Germany. It was here that I understood the different societal functions that religion can take on—it is not just a moral guideline, but also something entertaining and highly political; religion has to offer more than just spirituality if it does not want to vanish—and it was here that I realized how important Graham's work in Germany was, how much it tells us about the different societal functions of American neo-evangelicalism and what it reveals about the friendship between your country and mine.

In the following, I will analyze Billy Graham's Crusades not just as a challenge, but as a chance for religion in Germany. I hope to show as well that the religious landscapes of Germany and the U.S. are, of course, different, but present convergences due to comparable secular challenges and mutual influences. Thus, join me on a journey that begins in Chicago.

Here, on Memorial Day 1945, Chicagoland Youth for Christ held a rally at Soldier Fields that was attended by 70,000 people. Youth for Christ was just one new player in the revival that gained momentum in the mid-1940s in the US—Joel Carpenter has marvelously described this event in his book *Revive Us Again*.¹ Among its central figures were the former president of the Wheaton College Alumni Association Torrey Johnson and Wheaton alumnus Billy Graham.

Youth for Christ's success was based on its exciting new methods and events that were typical

for the emerging neo-evangelical movement whose face Billy Graham would become in the 1950s. Open towards society, the new evangelicals were eager to change it and yearned to restore evangelical Christianity's respectability and cultural impact. From the beginning, they had a global vision of evangelizing the world. From the perspective of Youth for Christ, both goals were related to the new American foreign policy after World War II: If America wanted to be the shining center of the Free World, as well as democratize and support it, then it first needed a spiritual revival itself.

Youth for Christ was part of America's foreign policy plan after 1945, which emphasized the country's responsibility for freedom, democracy, and wealth not just at home but also abroad. In 1946, Youth for Christ set out on its first international tour. Billy Graham, Torrey Johnson, Chuck Templeton, and Stratton Shufelt took off for Great Britain and Europe. For Billy Graham, five more European trips would follow over the next three years. While he focused on Great Britain, Torrey Johnson established close contacts to Protestant ministers and youth leaders in Germany. These contacts, which we know about from the collection of Torrey Johnson letters that the BGCA holds, tell a story of support, hopes, fears, and cultural misunderstandings.

As early as May 23, 1945, two weeks after the unconditional surrender of the Third Reich, Torrey Johnson wrote a letter to Martin Niemoeller, one of the leading German Protestant ministers who had survived imprisonment in a concentration camp under the Nazis. Niemoeller had close ties to the US and was therefore well known to Johnson. Torrey Johnson offered "to send a battalion of young Americans to Germany and other lands of Europe, to show the young people the way back to God, to decency, and to everything that is high and holy."ⁱⁱⁱ Niemoeller was obviously moved by the offer, but he feared that his fellow German Christians might not accept the help from a nation that they saw only as an occupation force. He also believed that German Christians had to take their fate into their own hands. In a letter to Johnson, he answered: "... I think that, for the first time at least, we shall have to do this work by ourselves, until some new relation between the conquered and the victors may arise which will take its time. ... For the moment our people over here are shaky with horror and shame, and the first thing to do will be to make people feel, that the Christians in Germany itself are taking their share in its needs and sorrows"ⁱⁱⁱⁱ However, Niemoeller expressed his hope that in the near future, Youth for Christ might be able to start its work in Germany.

It was in 1947 that the relationship between the United States and Germany profoundly changed. The U.S. released the Marshall Plan, the economic recovery program for Germany, the first CARE packages had arrived, and Germans learned that Americans had come not to oppress them but to liberate and support them. This new understanding paved the way for Youth for Christ in Germany.

It was then that German Church and youth leaders invited Youth for Christ to come to Germany and asked for their support. In April 1947, Torrey Johnson came to Germany following an International Youth conference in Birmingham, England. After his trip, he published a report on what he had seen and experienced in Germany in the *Youth for Christ Magazine*, which you can find in the Billy Graham Center Archives. The report obviously made an impact on Youth for Christ leaders, and in August of the same year, Johnson informed his contact Willi Diezel that Germany would receive the largest amount of money of all countries Youth for Christ was

supporting at that time. He also mentioned that they had agreed on an additional sum for material support of Germany like clothing and food.

It was the material help that opened the door for the spiritual work of Youth for Christ. In May 1947, Youth for Christ met with several German Protestant leaders in Bad Homburg to discuss the founding of a German Youth for Christ branch. Here, German Protestants openly expressed disagreement with the American methods of preaching the Gospel. They made a strong case that the German Youth could not relate to the music program used by Americans. When on August 26, 1947, the German branch of Youth for Christ was called into existence, the last paragraph of the agreement between the American organization and the German representatives specified that the Germans were free to use whatever methods they felt would be most promising—and the music program was explicitly mentioned.

But the cultural disagreement was not just about music; it was also about the idea of mass evangelism itself. This is obvious in the personal meeting between Torrey Johnson and Martin Niemoeller that finally took place in Geneva in 1948. Discussing the prospect of mass-evangelist campaigns in Germany, Niemoeller expressed his admiration for the work of Youth for Christ but stated as well that he saw the Protestant future of Germany rather in personal evangelicalism than in mass evangelism. However, Niemoeller continued to support Johnson and Graham's work. In 1955, he said the closing prayer at Graham's Crusade in Frankfurt.

The work of Youth for Christ was intertwined with the U.S. postwar program for Germany and has to be interpreted as part of it. The Allied armed forces had liberated the country; now the Americans wanted to reeducate its population, democratize the society, and reestablish its moral core. And it is exactly this strategy that made it possible for Germany to recover and blossom as it continues to do today. My country will be forever grateful for the hope and encouragement we received from the U.S. after the war.

It was the work of Youth for Christ in Germany that Billy Graham could build on when he came to Germany for his first crusade in 1954. Before that, his role in American evangelicalism had changed and evolved. With his crusade in Los Angeles in 1949, where he preached for eight weeks in a tent, Graham's career as a national, religious figure had taken off. Thousands of people had come to see him, and the press broadly covered the event. Soon, the good-looking, young preacher appeared on the covers of *Time*, *Life*, and *Newsweek*. Media mogul William Randolph Hearst actively supported Graham's campaign.

There were several reasons for Graham's success.^{iv} First of all, he had the charisma, the spirit, and sincerity that made him unique and convincing. Second—and here the cultural historian comes through—the crusades he held in the United States were products of the particular cultural atmosphere of the 1950s at the beginning of the Cold War.^v Graham's religious message resonated with the cultural values prevalent after World War II—with the aim of shaping a uniform, American Christian community—it was highly patriotic and loaded with anti-communist sentiments. His message was easy: Being a Christian meant being a good American. In addition, Graham created and shaped a new evangelical religiousness. His use of mass media and event strategies produced new religious communities and a unique neo-evangelical religiousness that exemplifies how religion can adapt to modernity.

When Graham returned to Germany, he brought the modern format of his crusades with him, challenging German Protestantism and German society in many ways. We get a very good impression of the atmosphere during the European campaigns in the 1950s when we go through the film collection the Billy Graham Center Archives hold: There are several documentaries on the London Crusade and one that I have personally learned from a lot titled *Battleground Europe* produced by the Billy Graham Movement in 1956. It shows Billy Graham preaching in different European cities with good shots of the audiences. This gives one an impression of British, French, and German reactions to seeing Billy. It also provides marvelous insight into the self-understanding of the young Billy Graham Movement. It also highlights what Germans and Americans both feared the most, namely, that Graham's call on the masses could bring back memories of the Third Reich.

Billy Graham's campaign in Germany in 1954 had a happy omen: Graham came to Germany after he had preached for three months in London's Harringay Arena. Every evening 12,000 people came; 120,000 Christians and "Christians to be" attended his last service at Wembley Stadium. Taken all together, he had attracted 2 million British spectators. The German press had widely covered the London Crusade, and German Protestant churches had sent scouts to London to find out more about the American hero who had crossed the Atlantic Ocean to fight secularization in Europe. Graham's campaigns were embedded in a new decade in German history after the war: In the 1950s, the German economic miracle had taken off—thanks to the American Marshall Plan—and Germans were yearning for American consumer goods, American entertainment, and to belong to the Free Western World.

Graham came to Germany in 1954 as an American superstar. He also entered a world of ideas that was shaped by fears of secularization and an indefinite yearning for belonging that meandered between "America" and the "Occident."^{vi} The German press welcomed Graham emphatically, and enthusiastic Germans greeted him in large numbers, pouring into airports to get his autograph. Moreover, the ice stadium in Dusseldorf, which his campaign team had booked, proved too small for the crowds, and so a larger venue had to be arranged. Traveling in buses to his Crusade in Berlin, German Christians numbered over 80,000 on a single evening. Never had he drawn such large audiences in the U.S. All had come to see the man the press had advertised as a movie star.

To get an impression of how the German press received and advertised Graham, you should examine the marvelous newspaper clipping collection the Billy Graham Center Archives hold. On several microfilm-roles, you can find hundreds of articles on how the Germans interacted with Graham, what they loved about him, what confused them, and what made them come forward at the end of the service. The Billy Graham Center Archives do not just hold clippings from the major German newspapers comparable to the *Chicago Tribune* or the *New York Times* but also publications from small towns. This collection makes it possible for me to not just talk about Graham in Berlin or Hamburg but about Graham in Germany on the whole.

Graham, the man, provided the focal point in the media. They described his good looks, his composure, and the casual manner in which he spread his easy-to-follow, never displeasing message. His pulpit—surrounded by microphones and spotlights—was characterized as "modern," his methods as "American." His campaigns were considered metropolitan and

cosmopolitan.^{vii} A typical description of Graham from the *Heilbronner Stimme* reads: “Billy Graham is a missionary in our time. He operates with microphones and spotlights. He travels in an airplane from one big city to another, from one continent to another!” For Germans, Graham evoked a taste of the West, and they went for it greedily. Moreover, the musical acts Graham framed his religious events with—country singers, large choirs, trumpets, and piano performances; in a word, entertainment—further heightened the attraction. Apart from that, there were no other cultural events, except maybe in sports, that drew such masses at that time in Germany.

Graham’s religious show was surely alluring to many of his younger followers. However, older Germans, too, came to Graham’s campaigns—some of them out of curiosity, others because they were genuinely seeking the experience of religious community that their churches could no longer provide. In this, the German yearning for American excitement, the search for traditional Christian values beyond materialism, and the desire to feel a sense of belonging to a transnational community called “the Western World” intertwined. Even though Graham’s form of religion with an invitation at the end of the service was foreign to most German Protestants, some came forward at the end of every single evening.

Therefore, many leading German Protestants embraced Graham’s campaigns. Bishop Hanns Lilje praised Graham for his ability to reach those who would otherwise never set a foot in a church. He did not share the fears expressed by other Protestants that Graham’s crusades created a religious community that might make German churches dispensable.^{viii} In a time when the Protestant churches were looking for new methods to reach old and new members, including movies, journals, and broadcasting, Graham provided yet another modern way to spread the Gospel.^{ix} The newspaper *Die Welt* joined the chorus of praise when it reported that “Grahams Methoden wirken auf den Europa er etwas befremdlich, aber sein Ziel ist gut und sein Wollen ist echt.” (Graham’s methods seem strange to most Europeans, but his aim is a good one and his effort is genuine.) Berlin’s bishop Otto Dibelius was one of Graham’s strongest supporters. He said the closing prayer at Graham’s crusade in the Olympia Stadium before intoning the famous hymn “Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott.” In 1960, when Graham came back to Germany, Dibelius—who couldn’t make it to the event—sent a letter that was read out at the crusade in which he described Billy Graham in Martin Luther’s words: “God’s Word and mercy is an errant cloudburst that pours itself out once in order to move on; one must use the hour in which He is there!” In 1966, he published a supportive article before Billy’s next visit with the wonderful quote: “In the long run it will show where Christ is being preached more powerfully: in a well-set Protestant Church of Germany where Christian performances are prevalent without making any decision, or in the Baptist Churches in the South of the U.S.A. where everything is put into one denominator but where decisions are being made.” That is how small the world of evangelism had become.

Nevertheless, critical voices within the Protestant Church could also be heard expressing fear of an “Americanization” of German Protestantism. They feared that the gift of being saved was being turned into a commodity; that the experience of spiritual conversion was a long-term and sometimes painful process that couldn’t be accomplished merely by coming forward at a public revival event. Such critics closed ranks with German intellectuals who condemned Graham’s campaigns in terms that recounted common anti-American stereotypes: The weekly

magazine *Der Spiegel* put the American prophet on its cover in June 1954 with the headline “Religion für den Massenkonsum” (Religion for mass consumption). Eva von Merveldt, sent to Berlin by the weekly *Die Zeit*, observed that Graham’s crusade in the Olympia Stadium had more in common with a “big carnival” than with a church service. She described a setting dominated by the vending of sausages, Coca-Cola, and religious booklets. The obvious interaction of religion, event, and consumer culture provoked sometimes sharp criticism in the German press. Manifest in the descriptions of Graham as a salesman and the association between Graham and Coca-Cola as American exports was the cultural clash between American revivalism and German Protestantism.

Graham’s campaigns in Germany also had a strong political subtext and function. In the same way that Graham redefined the American national community after the Second World War, he also gave Germans the feeling of belonging to a broader transnational community called the West. Even though Graham himself always pointed out that his mission was a religious undertaking, many statements and events turned him into a political figure, and the German press portrayed him as such. In Frankfurt, where Graham preached in 1954 in front of U.S. armed forces, he spoke not just on religious topics. He commented, as well, on Germany’s role in the Cold War. He praised Germany’s reconstruction, mentioned the country’s fear of Russia, and advocated its rearmament.^x The German press gratefully picked up on this message. Newspapers all over Germany like the *Kieler Nachrichten* came up with headlines like “Billy Graham predigt deutschen Verteidigungsbeitrag” (Billy Graham preaches German rearmament).^{xi} With this statement, Graham entered straight into fiery debates that were taking place in German Protestant circles at that same time. Here, a significant part of the movement opposed German rearmament and tended towards pacifism in reaction to the experience of the last war.

Graham’s trips to Berlin in 1954, 1960, and 1966 were especially loaded with political symbolism. In 1954, on a Sunday afternoon, Graham preached before 80,000 people in the Olympia Stadium. Before the event, he met with the mayor of Berlin, Dr. Walther Schreiber, and signed his name in the Golden Book of the city. Interviewed by the press, he acknowledged the city’s especially difficult situation and stated: “We have often prayed for the heroic citizens of this city.”^{xii} With such statements, he contributed to a discourse that put Berlin in the center of the Free World and the Cold War. He repeated this in 1966 when he returned to Berlin, which he defined as the “strategically most important city on the world.”

In German political circles, people realized how important the American preacher was in the Cold War. When the preacher returned to Berlin in 1960, The German Ministry for German-German affairs—the bureaucratic center of German anti-communism—generously gave 10,000 marks to sponsor the event.^{xiii} At that time, the nuclear arms race and the Cold War struggle over West Berlin were undeniably present. Even though Billy Graham tried to avoid making any political statements, his own political conservatism came out in various remarks. Asked for his moral opinion on the military use of nuclear power, Billy answered that he hadn’t entirely thought the topic through. However, he added later that he was not a pacifist and that self-defense was important and justified in some situations.^{xiv}

Such statements—taken together with Graham’s nickname “God’s Machine Gun”—shaped Graham’s public image in Germany. The press did not just portray him as a Christian soldier, but

as a Cold Warrior. His significance in Cold War politics is also reflected in the GDR's propaganda battle against him. The GDR's press redubbed Graham "Brandt's Machine Gun,"^{xv} and GDR officials worked to undermine the crusade he held in a tent on the Platz der Republik, which faced the Brandenburg Gate.^{xvi}

I would argue that the political dimension of Graham's work added to his success in Germany: his campaigns there do not merely comprise an episode in the history of German Protestantism but also have to be interpreted as part of the culture of the Cold War. In Graham's campaigns, his evangelical mission and the American mission to create a free world that was not just anti-communist but also Christian intertwined. However, Graham's strong patriotism and the American identity of his movement provoked criticism during his campaigns in Germany in 1970, exactly when the Vietnam War was challenging the American-German friendship.

At a preliminary meeting held in Dortmund in 1970, German Protestant ministers pressed Graham on his stand on race relations in the U.S. and the Vietnam War. Graham replied first: "I do not represent the U.S. government. I represent the Kingdom of God," again underlining the religious core of his mission. Later he added, "Now concerning Vietnam, I promise you this: If Germany is invaded by a foreign power, and the U.S. comes to your aid, I will not lead a demonstration down Pennsylvania Avenue against giving you that aid."^{xvii} Graham had struck the right note in reminding Germans of their own experiences with American troops who had once come to liberate them. Again in 1970, Graham proved to be exceedingly popular with German audiences.

Although the Vietnam War led to a new form of political critique in the German press, the masses nevertheless came again to see the American prophet. It seems that Graham had already shaped a community of followers that was no longer identical with the Western Cold War community, but rather crossed European borders, including into the East, by means of television.

In 1970, he launched an elaborate and ambitious effort to reach Western Europe and Yugoslavia simultaneously by projecting crusade services from Dortmund, Germany, onto big screens.^{xviii} The campaign was called EURO '70. The event in Dortmund was transmitted to 39 European cities; the attendance at the different public viewings reflected the different religious situations in the countries. While Graham was successful in Scandinavia, Austria, and Germany, attendance in secular France was rather poor. The public viewing in Zagreb should be highlighted since Yugoslavia was the only Eastern European country to participate. There, with the Roman Catholic Church supporting and advertising the event, the large crowds present for the public viewing overflowed from the central cathedral into an auxiliary hall.

Regardless of the strong criticism of Graham's political stand on the Vietnam War, he enjoyed growing acceptance in Germany. Again, the worsening situation in German churches at the end of the 1960s contributed to this. The German Protestant News Agency EPD published an article after the 1970s EURO campaign entitled: "Do Our Churches Do the Wrong Thing?" The article acknowledged the paradox that, on the one hand, church membership was dropping at the end of the 1960s in Germany and Germans were increasingly distancing themselves from churches and religious life while, on the other hand, the crowds that came to Dortmund to hear Billy Graham showed clearly that German society possessed a religious potential that its own churches just

could not reach. In this regard, Euro '70 became the wake-up call for German churches, which then developed new ways to communicate with their members. One of the German participants recalled the situation in Germany at that time later in an interview, which is part of the Billy Graham Center Oral History Collection: "I think I sensed, in general, a greater spiritual lethargy in the church, even among those we might call evangelical churches. Worldliness had crept in, and some of the churches were in pretty sad shape. The 1970 Crusade was a real shot in the arm for many of the churches." After the Euro '70, the evangelical movement in Germany became stronger, especially within the Evangelical Alliance, where Billy Graham's long-time friend and interpreter Peter Schneider now became the director.

Graham had opened his door to the East during Euro '70. In the 1980s, crusades in the GDR—the East German socialist state—Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Hungary followed. The campaign in the GDR, however, failed. Billy preached in six East German cities, among them East Berlin in the now famous Gethsemane Church in October 1982. The East German Church, state, and audiences, not able to relate to his preaching style, met him with restraint. In an interview with William Martin, Graham recalled a meeting with the GDR Church leadership: "When I walked in, I did not see a warm eye in the place. I shook hands with several people, and they gave me a very cold look." The press portrayed his audiences in the GDR as confused. Graham couldn't relate to the needs of the population living under communist oppression any more than they could relate to his message. The GDR's churches did not participate in the dynamics of the Americanization of West German Protestantism. On the Western side of the Iron Curtain, the German audience was trained in American consumer and entertainment culture. Americans had lived among them for decades, and they bought American products with joy and passion. East Germans were cut off from this development. Even though they were able to watch American movies and listen to American pop music, these trends bore a different meaning for them. They hadn't grown up with Billy Graham, and now it seemed too late to catch up.

GDR church officials gave various reasons for their resistance. Many of them knew that the GDR had opened the door to Graham only for political reasons, namely, to strengthen US-GDR relations. Others had felt abandoned by Graham in their fight for more religious freedom in their country. Another important reason might have been that many of them had general reservations towards America.

Despite this moderate failure, Graham's success story continued and even made its way into former East Germany when the Cold War came to an end. German unification changed the religious landscape in Germany as Protestant Church members reached out to their brothers and sisters in the new German states. The German evangelicals also felt a need to unify the country by converting their atheist brothers and sisters in the East. Therefore, the evangelization of the East did not just make use of traditional German church patterns and rituals, but also of mass evangelicalism. In 1993, the campaign ProChrist was launched in Germany. Now every two to three years, a revival event is held in a different German city. The event is transmitted via satellite to different European places. The first ProChrist campaign was held in Essen, and the guest speaker was, of course, Billy Graham.

The ProChrist campaign that was held in 2000 centered in Bremen, but 1.4 million people participated via public viewing in the event in more than a thousand places all over Europe,

among them cities in Austria, Switzerland, France, Poland, and Hungary, with the program dubbed into 15 languages. This campaign continued the format Billy Graham had established in Germany and Europe in the 1950s. Since then, evangelicals in Europe have considered themselves part of a transnational European and even global evangelical movement. It was in 1993 that one of the participants of the ProChrist campaign stated in an interview: “What we also very much appreciate about Billy Graham is that he is not an American; he is international.” The image of the American superstar who had come to sell God and Coca-Cola had finally been overcome.

In conclusion, the global revival of religion dates back to the 1950s. It seemed to be a spiritual reaction for coping with the experiences of the Second World War, the Holocaust, and the fears that the beginning Cold War engendered. Billy Graham’s crusades in Germany in 1950s and 1960s were also an example of the interaction of culture clashes and cultural integration: They confronted German society with a religiousness that was more emotional, more expressive, and more entertainment-oriented than German Protestantism. But the continuing integration of German society into transnational political communities like the Free Western World and into a rapidly developing global consumer society absorbed the brunt of this clash so that Graham’s German audiences could relate to his message infused with familiar political statements and icons of an Americanized popular culture. Graham’s religious mission provided his German audiences with an anchor in the political and ideological remapping of the world at the beginning of the Cold War, and it provided entrance into a global consumer and entertainment culture. At the same time, he created a new evangelical community in Germany and Europe that was united by the experience of his crusades even if only via public viewing.

Graham’s crusades in Germany also marked the beginning of a growing acceptance of more modern preaching techniques that continues today. Public viewing of Graham’s broadcasts gave German believers a sense of belonging to a transnational religious community called evangelicalism. Even though his followers worship in German free churches, they are also open to media transmission and are used to the flow of American pamphlets, books, and videos that shape their belief system.

Today, the German religious landscape is showing initial signs of diversification. In the last few decades, different Protestant free churches have been growing, and Christian youth movements have been traveling across Europe—some of them still following the path of Youth for Christ. Moreover, Germany has lost a bit of its secular edge: Politicians have started to talk more openly about their religious background, and Germans as well as other Europeans have begun to discuss a Christian identity for Europe. In addition, in 2001, the famous German left-wing philosopher Jürgen Habermas—whom I deeply admire—acknowledged the role of religion in defining a moral guideline for German society. Things are changing slowly, but they are changing. Looking from here towards my country—the same perspective Billy had in the mid-1950s – I am sure that he had an impact on German religious life.

ⁱ Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (Oxford and New York, 1997).

ⁱⁱ Johnson to Niemoeller, May 23, 1945, BGCA, Collection 285, Box 26, Folder 5.

ⁱⁱⁱ Niemoeller to Johnson, September 9, 1945, BGCA, Collection 285, Box 26, Folder 5.

^{iv} Biographies on Billy Graham: David Aikman, *Billy Graham: His Life and Influence* (Nashville 2007); William Martin, *A Prophet With Honor: The Billy Graham Story* (New York, 1991); William McLoughlin, *Billy Graham: Revivalist in a Secular Age* (New York, 1960).

^v For the historical context see also: Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore, 1991) and Robert Wuthnow, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America since the 1950s* (Berkeley, 1998).

^{vi} Axel Schildt, *Zwischen Abendland und Amerika: Studien zur westdeutschen Ideenlandschaft* (Munich, 1999).

^{vii} Quote: “Billy Graham ist ein Missionar in unserer Zeit. Er arbeitet mit Mikrophon und Scheinwerfer. Er reist im Flugzeug von Großstadt zu Großstadt, von Kontinent zu Kontinent!” *Heilbronner Stimme*, June 16, 1954.

^{viii} Interview in *Der Spiegel*, June 23, 1954.

^{ix} Schildt, *Zwischen Abendland und Amerika*, 113.

^x *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, June, 24, 1954.

^{xi} *Kieler Nachrichten*, June 24, 1954.

^{xii} *Die Neue Zeitung*, June 27, 1954.

^{xiii} Stadtarchiv Berlin, B Rep. 002-1765, Der Bundesminister für Gesamtdeutsche Fragen an das Deutsche Zentral-Komitee der Deutschen Ev. Allianz, 22.2.1961 betr.: Großstadt-Evangelisation mit Billy Graham.

^{xiv} *Schwerter Zeitung*, September 23, 1960.

^{xv} *Neues Deutschland*, September 24, 1960.

^{xvi} Stadtarchiv Berlin, C Rep. 104-678, Staatssekretär für Kirchenfragen an den Magistrat von Groß-Berlin, betr.: NATO-Veranstaltung mit Billy Graham vom 26.9. bis 2.10.1960 in Westberlin.

^{xvii} Quote from Martin, *A Prophet with Honor*, 380.

^{xviii} 18. Martin, *A Prophet with Honor*, 379-381.