



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Melany Ethridge (972) 267-1111

Chicken Soup for the Soul Receives Authorization From Billy Graham To Create Unique Tribute

***Chicken Soup for the Soul: Billy Graham & Me* will be a one-of-a-kind anthology containing personal stories from world leaders, including every living president, celebrities and the people who know him best**

COS COB, CONN. Sept. 27, 2012 – Chicken Soup for the Soul, the best-selling and trusted publishing brand, today announced it has been authorized to create a special hardcover anthology documenting the life and legacy of the world’s best-known evangelist. *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Billy Graham & Me*, which will be distributed through Simon & Schuster, and released Feb. 12, 2013.

This authorized compilation will contain 101 personal and impactful stories from some of the most influential leaders in government, business, sports, entertainment, and religion as well as Mr. Graham’s friends and family. Just as Mr. Graham’s ministry transcended religious, racial and political boundaries, so does the list of contributors to this book as they reveal and confirm his place in history. Prominent Christian pastors, leaders from other faiths, celebrities, heroes, regular citizens, and remarkably, every living US president – collectively document the effects of Mr. Graham’s worldwide ministry over more than six decades.

“We are delighted to have the opportunity to bring Billy Graham’s message of hope and renewal to current and future generations of readers,” said Steve Posner, Ed.M., Harvard University and Lecturer at the University of Southern California, who is editing the book. “Mr. Graham’s teachings will be shared by those who have personal stories to tell regarding their own encounters with the world’s most beloved Christian preacher.”

Many of the stories discuss Mr. Graham’s friendliness and modesty, as does President Obama in his account about meeting the evangelist, whom he describes as “a man whose faith had changed the world and had sustained him through triumphs and tragedies, movements and milestones,” who was warm and welcoming to all. “This man who had prayed great prayers that inspired a nation, this man who seemed larger than life, greeted me and was as kind and gentle as could be.”

Others talk about how Billy Graham strengthened their faith, as does President George W. Bush in his story in which he reveals that, though religion had always been a part of his life, he wasn’t really a believer until he met Mr. Graham. “I was captivated by Billy,” he admits. “He had a powerful presence, full of kindness and grace, and a keen mind...In his gentle, loving way, Billy began to deepen my shallow understanding of faith. ‘There’s nothing wrong with using the Bible as a guide to self-improvement,’ he told me. ‘Jesus’ life provides a powerful example for our own. But self-improvement is not really the point of the Bible. The center of Christianity is not the self. It is Christ.’”

Others discuss Billy Graham’s role in positive change in this country, as does President Bill Clinton, who describes his experience as a young boy attending Mr. Graham’s 1958 Little Rock Crusade. “When I look back to what the world looked like in 1958, when I first encountered Billy, I know Billy’s crusade didn’t abolish racism or the periling vestiges of segregation,” he wrote. “But he showed us that by following our faith we would move the rock up the hill...that faith is Billy Graham’s great gift to the world.”

Catholic Cardinal Timothy Dolan shares about Mr. Graham’s three audiences with Pope John Paul II. “As an unwavering lifetime devotee of evangelical Christianity, Mr. Graham did not try to blur their respective theological differences as Protestant and Catholic,” he recalls. “The spiritual generosity that Mr. Graham preached celebrated a universal message of love and compassion that people of all faiths can embrace.”

Pastor Joel Osteen reminisces on Mr. Graham’s humility, which he observed during his first encounter with the evangelist. “When he walked in the room that day, I could definitely feel the presence of God,” he opines. “It feels like strength, it feels like peace, it feels like respect, and it feels like love. I was amazed at the interest he took in my ministry... ‘Dr. Graham, I’ve learned from the best. I’ve learned from you.’ And he just laughed and said, ‘I don’t know what you could have learned from me.’”

Billy Graham is also considered by many to be the most important spiritual leader in their lives. President Jimmy Carter references Mr. Graham as the individual most influential in his spiritual development. “He was constantly broad-minded, forgiving, and humble in his treatment of others,” he reveals. “He has reached out to all people – black or white, American or foreign, man or woman – for opportunities to serve God.”

Fox News television host Bill O’Reilly, who regularly interviews important newsmakers on his program, offers his perspective on Mr. Graham’s unique influence. “I can’t think of anyone who had more access to so many people in powerful positions in so many administrations as Billy Graham did,” he concludes. “There had to be a reason, and I think it lies in his decency, his goodness, his simplicity. These are very transparent virtues. They cannot be faked, and by all accounts, Billy Graham has them in full measure.”

Network television host Kathie Lee Gifford reflects on her experience as a young girl at the crossroads of life making a faith commitment at one of Mr. Graham’s meetings. “In a sense, I owe my physical life to my mom and dad, who brought me into this world, and my spiritual life to Billy Graham which will lead me into the world beyond.” She further shares the lyrics of a song, “Our Loving Eyes,” which she co-wrote for Ruth and Billy Graham in celebration of their 60th wedding anniversary.

A portion of the proceeds from *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Billy Graham & Me* will be donated to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

“We are committed to affecting people’s lives positively in everything we do, from our books that have been a special favorite among communities of faith, to our new line of healthy comfort foods,” said William J. Rouhana, Jr., CEO of Chicken Soup for the Soul. “We are delighted and honored that Mr. Graham has entrusted us with part of the responsibility and privilege of documenting his legacy.”

Chicken Soup for the Soul Publishing, LLC, publishes the famous Chicken Soup for the Soul book series, which is distributed through Simon & Schuster, Inc. Since 1993, books in the Chicken Soup for the Soul series have sold more than 100 million copies in the United States and Canada alone. Chicken Soup for the Soul titles have been sold in more than 100 countries and translated into more than forty languages. Chicken Soup for the Soul Publishing also licenses the right to use its famous brand to high-quality licensees.

The company is currently implementing a plan to expand into all media—working on several TV shows as well as a major motion picture, and developing a digital presence dedicated to life improvement, emotional support, inspiration, and wellness. *USA Today* named Chicken Soup for the Soul one of the five most memorable and impactful books in the last quarter century. Last week, Time magazine featured the launch of Chicken Soup for the Soul foods in the “Culture” section. For more information visit www.chickensoup.com.

– 30 –

Note to Editors: For more information or to arrange an interview with book editor Steve Posner; or with Billy Graham spokesman A. Larry Ross call Melany Ethridge at 972.267.1111 or Melany@alarryross.com.