

Billy Graham – Echoes in the Shadows

by Bill C. Davis

In 1991 when Billy Graham stayed overnight in the white house on the night the Gulf War began I wondered then what he was doing there. Was he praying for peace or that no American soldier would be killed or wounded? Was he praying at all? Was he there to deliver by his presence a moral sanction for a military solution to an international problem? Who knows what was said that night? I wonder if he had anything to say about the Iraqi people. We won't know because the Bushes would never express their megalomania by taping every word of their existence as Nixon, thankfully, did.

As in 1972, things said in the shadows still fuel the national narrative but now with the help of those tapes we are better able to imagine what is presently being said. The Nixon tapes are like a guided tour. We would hope that glimpses into what has been said in the hallowed halls of government when no one is supposed to be listening would be inspiring and stimulating. What the Billy Graham/ Nixon tape exposes are fear, disdain, religious chauvinism and hubris. All other proofs of these particular engines in the present Bush strain of government have been hermetically sealed like a climate-controlled skyscraper. But the Nixon tapes are its illuminating shadow.

The Nixon/Graham tape is like DNA on a cotton swab from the mouth of a man involved in a paternity suit. The genetic code of the present mysterious and bastard government is in that taped exchange between the holy man and the strung out commander-in-chief. The Billy Graham on that tape is the same man who saved minor George's soul. He's the same man who preaches that the only way to salvation is through Jesus Christ. Jews to Billy Graham are not saved – Muslims are not saved – the ONLY way to God, according to the revered reverend, is by accepting, as George has done, Jesus Christ as your personal savior.

Billy Graham is there in both Bush oval offices during each massive release of ordinance doing his best to put a blessed glow on the high tech holy sword. He must believe it's his destiny and duty to be in every oval office so he can guide the might of the military and the government to fulfill his mission of bringing the message of Christ to every living soul.

He is bowed to and treated with syrupy deference by every major television interviewer. He is asked for answers to deep, theological and philosophical questions – all in between phone calls and commercials. The interviewers are usually cowed and honored to be able even to ask him a question. Meanwhile Billy Graham is thinking that he is on a network run by pacifist Jews who are ruining the country because they reject what he knows and will declare - that Jesus is the only way for personal, national and global salvation. He knows this even as the pacifist Jews he categorically condemns live the word of Jesus more fully than he does.

When George, or someone from his coterie, called his war a crusade it was a calculated faux pas. He has Billy's blessings for this war. It's not a war against Islam, they say. But if Billy was telling Nixon that something had to be done about the Jews in the media what must he be saying to his born again acolyte about Muslims in the Middle East and beyond? George withdrew the word crusade but it lingers – it is the shadow title of this war.

As Cheney said, some not very nice people live on the land that has beneath it the substance we need. Subsonic Cheney with that Don Corleone whisper saying those people are "not very nice" is like saying they are as good as dead. Billy Graham saying that Jesus is the only way adds an epic Amen to Cheney's assessment of these non-Christian people. Economics and salvation merge – Jesus and global domination of resources can work hand in hand. Liberate the land, the people and the oil from the grips of those who are ultimately damned. Billy and both Bush

administrations is a match made in shadow heaven.

In Billy Graham's mind it must be that weaponry has caught up with the Jesus campaign. Try the missionary work first but if that doesn't work we have – finally – the power to back up what we know you must accept. In his mind a Christian country such as America must have lots of firepower because the world without Jesus is evil. The world, to Billy Graham, the patron saint of the oval office, is like the mob that came to take Jesus to his crucifixion and each of his presidents is like St. Peter taking out his sword and cutting off the ear of one of the soldiers.

What time and the military have done is erased Jesus' response to that gesture. Billy feels free to bypass any admonition from Jesus about living by the sword. He prefers the Battle Hymn of the Republic in which he helps wield the fateful lightning of the Old Testament's terrible swift sword. But the terrible swift irony is that using the sword for Jesus defeats Him. Attacking Jews in the name of Jesus insults Him. Being in the oval office for any other reason than to cast light on the shadows that some governments need to function, blocks Jesus. The man that puts Jesus at the center of the universe has put himself on the opposite side of the person he claims to live for.

If we listen carefully, the Nixon tapes will tell us what is now likely being said in a government that functions more and more in the shadows even as it announces that one already exists – somewhere – underground - outside Washington. Nixon gave us a great gift. Through his tapes we have proof of what Christ said – that things whispered in the shadows would be shouted from the rooftops. As things said on the Nixon tapes are shouted from the rooftops we have to listen for their echoes in the present canyons of power and we must look for who and what is casting the shadows.

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