

J. Patrick Ware, M.D.

Atlanta Family Psychiatry
Child, Adolescent, Adult And Family Psychiatry
P.O. Box 871149
Stone Mountain, Georgia 30087
770-806-8323
Web site: www.AtlantaFamilyPsychiatry.com
E-mail: DrJimPat@aol.com

4 September, 2006

Dr. & Mrs. William F. Graham
1 Billy Graham Parkway
Charlotte, NC 28201

Dr. & Mrs. William F. Graham
c/o Mrs. Ruth Graham
PO
Montreat, NC 28757

Re: Letter of deep gratitude

My Dear Dr. and Mrs. "Billy" Graham and Family:

This is a letter of deep gratitude to you and your family for the profound personal gifts and sacrifices that you and your family have made to me and modern global human history. I realize that chances are this letter may never reach your eyes. I am however writing this letter as a testimony on the part of one fellow pilgrim to your role in my life as a believer in Faith of the sacrificial gift in Love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As the grandson of two men who spent their lives in search of unseen value (one a petroleum production superintendent for a major US oil company and the other a regionally well known Western Kentucky Methodist evangelist and pastor in the 1950s and 1960s), I grew up having been fully immersed in the Holy Spirit from the age of 8 or 9 years of age. From a humble background I became an Emory University Child Psychiatrist in 1979.

I have experienced most of the challenges that life can bring – a divorce, a secular life, a bankruptcy, the death of a beloved spouse, a son being ordained as an Episcopal priest and the blessings of our Lord along the way.

I was aware in the beginning of my career that I sought to understand more about the heart of man and its relationship to the God of Love I was introduced to by my evangelistic grandfather in my early years. It seemed to me that no where I looked did I see a human understanding of so profound an experience as the love of God I had experienced as a youth. Medicine as a science when I began my career quietly understood that 85% of all clients seen in all specialties were coming from matters of the heart (professionally described as "primarily emotional" issues). The response of the medical profession was to prescribe most commonly Valium (a benzodiazepine that is in the same pharmacologic family as alcohol).

I had a sense that God was asking me to learn from the experiences that I was being asked to field. While it took nearly 50 years of living, working with others and experiencing the full spectrum of human emotion to get a grasp on the lessons of my life, I was clear along the way of several simple and primary truths (e.g. God's Love and the central value of Truth). I was painfully aware that that very few clinicians in all medical specialties including psychiatry seemed to be able to assist people more than my evangelistic grandfather had done 30 years earlier.

I began to simply track what elements of my work with clients seemed to be associated with any progress or relief of their misery and/or pain. All the while I was intensely aware that God had brought me heartache and intense burdens which were in themselves somehow my challenge to hold to what was true – there were times when I would literally fall to my knees and prayerfully ask my Lord: Why me? Where is this going? Is this there all that is? Will there ever be relief? What is the purpose of this journey and all of the pain? – for I clearly sensed that all of the pain and adversity were purposeful if not divinely delivered to my doorstep.

With the lessons learned from my clients and my own instinct that somehow there was purpose in truth irrespective of its flavor, over the years I began to put together a self awareness program that included in essence increased individual focus and awareness upon all of one's heart with less or hopefully no judgment. The results with individual clients were remarkable – progressive, substantive relief of fear, anxiety and the sense that these individuals were broken or diseased irrespective of any clinical diagnostic category or label they may have carried. In essence they were experiencing an increasing ability to accept the full gift of consciousness which I positively believe is a sacred gift without their own individual judgment about those things in their hearts. A challenge I had been facing personally all while studying and developing what was working with my clients. Most every person I worked with spontaneously added that as they worked that within days to weeks they experienced a closer more substantive tangible devout experience with God all as a result of learning how not to judge the very sacred gift we know as life itself. It became apparent that that apple in the Garden of Eden must have been human judgment of God's sacred gift of consciousness and that contentment and a full heart were the rewards of acceptance of God's gifts.

I decided in late 1996 to write a handbook for clients to facilitate their own discovery of this process (of accepting the divine sacred gift of consciousness without judging any of the elements irrespective of whether the experiences were of joy or of pain) and subsequently learned that while many authors were talking about how it felt to be “connected” and in harmony with their full spiritual self, few to none were assisting people in the “how to” part. (e.g. Conversations with God, Celestine Prophecy among many others). I then decided to self publish the book which I am enclosing. It is the result of my life's work in attempting to bridge the chasm of spirituality and humanity and I thought that you might have some interest in it. The late Marjorie Holmes expressed her delight and spiritual resonance shortly before her death after she kindly accepted a copy. In the recent Newsweek article “Billy Graham in Twilight” (a copy is enclosed), my heart was warmed as I read your perspective on the value of the absence of human judgment.

The purpose of my writing this letter is to thank you and your family for providing a tangible, meaningful, ever present spiritual uplift to me (and all members of my family including my evangelistic grandfather) all along my journey at your own great personal sacrifices. Over the years of trial and tribulation there was always (as my dear grandfather would call you) “Brother Billy” and your presence and the untiring message you delivered so evenly, unwaveringly, powerfully and provocatively was always there. I know I am but one of many. I and the world are deeply indebted to you. My prayers are with you and your family as you share God's love and harvest the bounty of a ministry and lives well lived.

With deepest gratitude
In Christ,

James Patrick Ware, MD