

Graham defends Gibson movie

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Rev. Billy Graham gave an enthusiastic thumbs-up to Mel Gibson's biblical epic, "The Passion of Christ," after a private screening with the movie star.

The film, which describes the hours before Jesus Christ's crucifixion, has generated complaints from some Jewish leaders, who say it suggests Jews were responsible for Christ's death. Conservative Catholics who have seen the film have called it powerful.

"The film is faithful to the Bible's teaching that we are all responsible for Jesus' death, because we all have sinned," the 85-year-old evangelist said. "It is our sins that caused his death, not any particular group."

In a statement released Tuesday by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, the Southern Baptist also said he "was moved to tears" by the film.

Gibson spent a reported \$30 million to produce the movie. Set for release Feb. 25, the movie's dialogue is in Latin, Hebrew and Aramaic with English subtitles.

"I doubt if there has been a more graphic and moving presentation of Jesus' death and resurrection, which Christians believe are the most important events in human history," Graham said.

Graham attended a screening a month ago — one of several Gibson has hosted for religious leaders. After one in August, Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League complained "the film unambiguously portrays Jewish authorities and the Jewish mob as the ones responsible for the decision to crucify Jesus."

Paul Lauer, the film's marketing director in Santa Monica, California, called Graham's endorsement "very important." Lauer said the film is faithful to the Gospel text.

"Therefore," he said, "we don't believe the film is anti-Semitic."

Graham apologized last year for disparaging remarks he made about Jews 30 years ago in an Oval Office conversation with President Nixon. The comments were released on audio tapes made by Nixon.

Exhibit explores art, religion

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"For the African American community there are two special surprises at the show that are well worth the visit," said Mints. Faith is so important to us. And the religious images are very moving and powerful to everyone who sees them.

a musical note. Music historian Dawn Anthony will explore the connection of faith in art and music for her African American roots to the diversity in song and celebration in today's worship circles.

The program is open to the public following museum admission. Visitors can

attend this special program for free by showing a Sunday church bulletin.

The show is on view until Jan. 11.

The Charlotte Post



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I don't care how many truths a teacher or preacher may know, if He does not know Christ as a living reality he cannot tell a sinner how God saves a sinner. He'll always boil it down to the sinner's choice. That is letting the sinner decide for Jesus. How tragically sad. My friends, I've lived the religious church life and it is empty. You have a name to live while you are dead. But the born again believer has a different story to tell. I'm talking about the risen Christ, the One who raised me from the dead. All the while I was on that religious profession I was dead and didn't know it. There was a great gulf between me and a thrice Holy God but I didn't know it. Do you realize there is a great gulf between you and a thrice Holy God? When I was under conviction I said to a godly woman from Hattiesburg, Mississippi; "it seems like the gulf grows wider," and she said to me; "it's been there all the while you just didn't know it." Our religious leaders have never known experimentally that a great gulf exists between a thrice Holy God and a lost sinner. But when you come to press a dying pillow you'll know it but too late then. You've made fun of me and others for pointing out the truth of how God saves a hell-deserving sinner but you won't make fun when you wake up in hell. I well remember calling my late pastor, L. R. Shelton, over long distance phone and telling him; "I wish I could believe like a little child." His response was, "You have a hard heart of unbelief." Now the average preacher or teacher would have told me; "Brother Little, just accept Jesus as your Saviour." And that is because you are ignorant of God's way of saving a poor, hell-deserving sinner. The blessed Holy Spirit convicts every sinner whom He deals with for salvation of his hard heart of unbelief. If He has not done that work in your heart you are not saved! Our church members have only an ignorant notion of salvation. When a man of the world dies, it is just one more face in hell. When a church member dies, it is a leap into the dark.



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