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## Bill Bright

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*This article is about the evangelist. For the linguist, see [William Bright](#). For other people with the same name, see [William Bright \(disambiguation\)](#).*

William R. "Bill" Bright (October 19, 1921 – July 19, 2003) was an [American evangelist](#). The founder of [Campus Crusade for Christ](#), he wrote [The Four Spiritual Laws](#) in 1952 and produced the [Jesus Film](#) in 1979.



Bill Bright, 1921-2003 

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### Early life

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Born in [Coweta, Oklahoma](#), Bright described himself as being a "happy pagan" in his youth. He graduated from [Northeastern State University](#) in [Tahlequah, Oklahoma](#) with an Economics degree. As a student at Northeastern State University, he was initiated into the Zeta Chapter of Sigma Tau Gamma Fraternity. While in his early 20s he moved to [Los Angeles, California](#) and founded a company called Bright's California Confections.

### Conversion / Early Ministry

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In 1944, while attending the [First Presbyterian Church, Hollywood](#), Bright became an [Evangelical Christian](#). He immediately began intensive [Biblical](#) studies which led him to graduate studies at [Princeton](#) and [Fuller Theological Seminaries](#) (although he never completed a degree at either). It was while he was a student at Fuller that he felt what he regarded as the call of God to help fulfill [Christ's Great Commission](#) (Matthew 28:19) by sharing his faith, beginning with students at [UCLA](#). This gave birth to the [Campus Crusade for Christ](#) movement.

During the decades to follow, Bill Bright and his wife, [Vonette](#), remained faithful to this work, and the ministry expanded greatly. [Campus Crusade](#) now has more than 27,000 full-time staff and over 225,000 trained volunteer staff in 190 countries.

Bill Bright's authorized biography is titled 'Amazing Faith' by Michael Richardson with a foreword by [Billy Graham](#).<sup>[1]</sup>

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## Accomplishments

Bright held five honorary doctorate degrees: a [Doctor of Laws](#) from the [Jeonbuk National University](#) of Korea, a [Doctor of Divinity](#) from [John Brown University](#), a [Doctor of Letters](#) from [Houghton Seminary](#), a [Doctor of Divinity](#) from the [Los Angeles Bible College and Seminary](#), and a [Doctor of Laws](#) from [Pepperdine University](#).

In 1983, he chaired the National Committee for the [National Year of the Bible](#). He was named the 1996 recipient of the \$1.1 million [Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion](#). He donated the prize money to causes promoting the spiritual benefits of fasting and prayer.

He wrote more than 100 books and booklets, and thousands of articles and pamphlets that have been distributed in most major languages by the millions. He was a signer of the document [Evangelicals and Catholics Together](#).

Bright was a co-founder of the [Alliance Defense Fund](#) which funds high profile litigation cases on behalf of Christians' [First Amendment](#) rights. He was also a co-signatory of the [Land letter](#) of 2002 which outlined a [just war](#) rationale for the [2003 invasion of Iraq](#), providing a theological underpinning for the invasion being planned by President [George W. Bush](#).

Bright was survived by his wife Vonette, sons Zachary and Brad, and four grandchildren.

The Rev. [Billy Graham](#) released a statement on Bright's death: "He has carried a burden on his heart as few men that I've ever known - a burden for the evangelization of the world. He is a man whose sincerity and integrity and devotion to our Lord have been an inspiration and a blessing to me ever since the early days of my ministry."



Bill Bright receives the Templeton Prize, 1996

## References

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- [Bill Bright Memorial Website](#)
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- [Campus Crusade for Christ International](#)
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### Templeton Prize laureates

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