

Billy Graham eulogizes Vance Havner

By CECILE HOLMES WHITE
Staff Religion Writer

At the funeral of evangelist Vance Havner Thursday, there was more laughter than tears, many quotations from Scripture and a loving eulogy by the Rev. Billy Graham.

"Vance Havner is where he is supposed to be," Graham told the 1,500 people in Greensboro's First Baptist Church. "He's in the Father's arms, and he has shared and heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Well done, thy good and faithful servant. ... Enter into the joy of your Lord.'"

Havner, a witty, down-to-earth preacher some called the "Will Rogers of the pulpit," died early Tues-

1,500 attend local evangelist's funeral

The Rev. Billy Graham said he favors sanctions to pressure South Africa — A6.

day at age 84. He had been a traveling evangelist for 72 years to the Southern Baptist Convention and other denominations. He was a member of First Baptist for 43 years.

In his sermon, Graham said he first met Havner in 1937 when Graham was a student at the Florida Bible Institute, a small Bible college near Tampa. Havner visited and preached there and met his wife,

the late Sara Allred Havner, on the campus.

"I was a student there for four years," Graham said. "He (Havner) came to me one day, and said, 'Billy, can we borrow your car?'"

"He said, 'I mean to drive it. Sara would have to do the driving.' And I had a 1929 Chevrolet that I paid \$75 for. And so he borrowed that Chevrolet. And in the meantime, I traded it for a '31 Oldsmobile that cost \$225. And they took it, and they had two flat tires on their trip. I never heard exactly how they got them fixed."

Preachers especially will miss

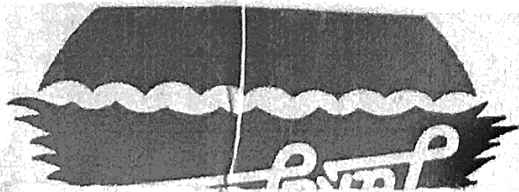
Havner, Graham said, "for his books are on all of our shelves and his illustrations are in our sermons."

"Someone has said, 'Everyone is born an original and dies a copy.' That wasn't true of Vance Havner. Havner was born an original, and he died an original."

"He was a humorous man. ... He could preach the most powerful sermon with conviction, and conviction would set upon the audience, and they would hang on every word. And one of his great gifts was to make people chuckle and laugh."

Among Havner's pointed quips cited by Graham:

• "Too many churches and too many church services start at 11 (See Havner, D4)



Other specific requests made by the group were:

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Havner's funeral was held at 11 a.m. Thursday at First Baptist Church in Greensboro. The service was led by the Rev. Billy Graham. Other speakers included the Rev. J. Lee Smith, pastor of the church, and the Rev. J. Lee Smith, pastor of the church. The service was held at 11 a.m. Thursday at First Baptist Church in Greensboro. The service was led by the Rev. Billy Graham. Other speakers included the Rev. J. Lee Smith, pastor of the church, and the Rev. J. Lee Smith, pastor of the church.

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Havner From D1

o'clock sharp and end at 12 o'clock dull."

• "The clock struck 12 at Sunday noon and the church gave up her dead."

• "This is the day of experts who have all the answers but don't know what the question is."

• "I used to say civilization was going to the dogs, but I've quit doing that out of respect for the dogs."

The Rev. Alton H. McEachern, pastor of First Baptist, said Havner was always himself.

"An English divine once prayed, 'Oh, God, make me intensely spiritual, but perfectly natural,'" McEachern said. "I don't know whether Vance Havner ever prayed that prayer or not. But he was a man who was intensely spiritual, but perfectly natural."

T.W. Wilson of Montreat, Havner's friend and an associate of Graham, told a story illustrating Havner's sense of humor and his belief in a heaven. The incident happened after Havner's wife died.

"A friend of his came up and said, 'Dr. Havner, I'm sorry to hear you've lost your wife,'" Wilson said. "'Lost her?' he said. 'She's not lost. I know exactly where she is.'"

Ninety minutes before the funeral, cars began packing First Baptist's parking lot off Friendly Avenue. Inside at 2 p.m., there were some seats but no empty pews. Church leaders, expecting people from out of state, had planned for as many as 3,000.

In the church, Havner's body lay in an open beige-gold casket covered by a spray of red carnations. Mourners paying respects noted Havner's black leather-bound Bible — its pages frayed by frequent use — placed in his hands.

He was buried in New Garden Cemetery.

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Friday, August 15, 1986