

Obama, Billy Graham meet at evangelist's home

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MONTREAT, N.C. (RNS)—President Obama and ailing evangelist Billy Graham exchanged prayers during their first meeting recently at Graham's home in western North Carolina.



President Obama meets with evangelist Billy Graham at his house in Montreat, N.C. (RNS/Pete Souza/The White House)

Obama had traveled to nearby Asheville, N.C., and requested the visit—the first time a sitting president has visited Graham at his residence, said Graham's longtime spokesman, Larry Ross.

Graham, 91, issued a statement saying he was pleased with the visit and encouraging “Christians everywhere to pray for our president.”

The White House described the meeting as one of conversation and “private prayer” and said Obama “is extraordinarily gratified that he took the time to meet with him.”

During the 35-minute meeting, the men—joined by Graham's son and fellow

evangelist Franklin Graham—discussed their wives, golf and Chicago. Graham gave the president two Bibles, one for himself and another for first lady Michelle Obama.

Graham has met with 12 presidents over six decades, starting with Harry Truman in 1950.