

SF Chronicle

# Graham Says Nixon Is Relying on Religion

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Former President Nixon has a renewed interest in religion, in the aftermath of Watergate, evangelist Billy Graham said yesterday.

Graham disclosed that he and Mr. Nixon shared 2½ hours of prayer and discussion of the Bible on March 9 at Mr. Nixon's San Clemente estate. Graham said that although the subject of Watergate never entered their discussion, it pervaded the air.

"I don't think the name Watergate came up at all," Graham said. "I'd say there was a studious avoidance of the subject by both of us. I certainly didn't want to bring it up."

In a story in the Albuquerque Tribune, Graham said his discussion with Mr. Nixon turned to religion shortly after a quiet, candlelight dinner.

"Most of our conversation was on

religion," Graham said. "He showed me a large book he'd been reading from his grandmother's library. It was a life of Christ and a very good one."

They talked about the Bible and about times of crisis in human life, then prayed together in Mr. Nixon's small study. The former president didn't indicate any bitterness toward anyone because of his resignation and the Watergate scandal, Graham said.

"Disappointment, perhaps, but not bitterness. He said no ugly things about anybody. Only positive things," Graham said.

Graham said Mr. Nixon did indicate he had "some regret that he'd let his friends down."

Mr. Nixon expressed concern about world affairs, particularly the Middle East and Indochina, and indicated he

would like to "make some kind of contribution" to the United States. Graham said he thought Mr. Nixon would like to become a foreign affairs adviser.

United Press