

# Graham Deplores Distortion of Patriotism

By EDWARD B. FISKE

The Rev. Billy Graham, who opens a five-day crusade tonight at Shea Stadium deplors widespread identification of patriotism with the political right.

"I think we have allowed patriotism to slip," he said in an interview on the eve of the crusade. "We have allowed the word 'patriotism' to get into the hands of some right-wingers."

The 51-year-old evangelist called for more confidence in American political institutions and asserted that patriotic symbols such as the flag are the property of all Americans.

"I don't guess anybody loves the flag more than some of the people that are against the war," he said.

Mr. Graham is returning to New York a year after a 10-day crusade in Madison Square Garden that drew 230,000 people, of whom nearly 11,000 made "decisions for Christ."

## 300,000 Expected This Time

The sponsoring committee of local churchmen hopes that this week's event, which ends Sunday afternoon, will attract as many as 300,000.

In other remarks, Mr. Graham described his relationship with President Nixon as strictly a "friendship" with no political overtones. He praised Sunday-morning church services in the White House, because they permit the President to hear "a cross-section of preachers."

Reflecting on his own 21 years of national prominence, the Baptist preacher attributed his popularity primarily to the fact that he is a symbol of "authoritative faith that works" in an era of religious uncertainty.

"We don't have too many people that really believe in anything," he said. "We've become a nation of skeptics and doubters. And to me the whole thing is a package all neatly wrapped up."



The New York Times

The Rev. Billy Graham said the patriotic symbols such as the flag are property of all Americans, not just one group.

Mr. Graham said that although doubt is "very normal" for most persons, including devout Christians, he had not had a single doubt about his faith since 1949. At that time, he said, "I went through a great period of doubt and settled it on my knees."

The evangelist said the forthcoming "Honor America Day" celebration in Washington on July 4 was consistent with his nonpolitical role. He is a co-sponsor of the event, along with Bob Hope, the comedian.

Among those endorsing the event, which will be highlighted by a mass rally and fireworks display at the Washington Monument, are former Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Harry S. Truman; Lawrence F. O'Brien and Rogers

C. B. Morton, respectively, the chairmen of the Democratic and Republican National Committees.

Mr. Graham said that the idea had emerged from a conversation he had some weeks ago with Hobart D. Lewis, president and editor in chief of Reader's Digest, in which they agreed that it would be a good idea to "try to get everybody together and say, 'We believe in the institutions of America.'"

The evangelist said that Mr. Lewis called him a week later and asked if he would be willing to join Mr. Hope in organizing such a program.

"I said yes, and I called Bob Hope, and the more we talked, the more enthusiastic I could see that Bob was about

it," the evangelist said. "And I said, 'Bob, let's keep it up away from the war. This is not pro-war or antiwar. Let's make it for all America.'"

Mr. Graham declined to discuss President Nixon's recent appointments of Henry Cabot Lodge as his personal envoy to the Vatican, on the ground that he was not familiar with the reasons for the move. He said that the President "has never discussed it with me."

Reflecting on his position as a national religious leader, Mr. Graham observed that as he grows older he is becoming more and more aware of the responsibilities he bears.

"I feel that God has given me the ear of the masses of people and a place of leadership and that I must be very careful that I lead in the right direction," he said.

The preacher said that if he had his career to begin over again, he would do "less speaking and more studying."

"I've done too many dedications, too many favors for friends that have taken my time, rather than keeping to my main targets," he said. "Everybody's asking you for something all the time."

Mr. Graham said that he would now have "far more to give" if he had spent more time in study, especially reading the Bible. "I wish that I knew the Bible a great deal more," he said.

The evangelist said that he expected to spend an increasing amount of time talking to seminarians, but he added that his own lack of seminary training was not necessarily regrettable.

"God says we have to become as little children, and I try to keep my faith simple like a child," he said. "Maybe this is one of the great blessings of having never gone to a seminary. I didn't have much to doubt."

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