

Graham Is Silent About Watergate

By Marjorie Hyer

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FORT WORTH, June 14—Evangelist Billy Graham today refused to offer any judgment on the Watergate scandal "until all the facts are in" but he did express the conviction that President Nixon would come out with a clean bill of health.

"I still have confidence in President Nixon," Graham said in response to reporters' prodding. "I believe he will survive."

"I believe he will be our President for the next three years and he will get my prayers. If he invites me to the White House I will go."

The evangelist was here to address the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern).

His 15-minute address to the assembly concentrated on his recent evangelistic crusade in Korea and all but avoided any mention of domestic crises.

Despite earlier criticism of Graham on the floor of the assembly for his failure to speak out on the Watergate crisis, the evangelist made only one reference to the scandal in his address.

In what he called "an emotional six months" he lumped together the death of President Truman, the inauguration of a new President Truman, the "inauguration of a new President," the death of President Johnson, the end of the Vietnam war and "the Watergate scandal."

"There seems to be a huge monster rolling across the country," he said and asked rhetorically: "Is this the beginning of the judgment of God?"

Following his address to the assembly, Graham spent nearly half an hour with some 25 youth delegates answering written questions before he spent another half-hour with the press.

One of the questions dealt with his relations with the President and his views on Watergate.

"It's too early for me to make a comment," he said, that would go beyond his generalized condemnation of "moral permissiveness" and "corruption in American life" he had issued early last month.

"I'm going to wait now till all the facts are in. The President has never discussed Watergate with me; he has had no private conversation with me in 18 months," he said.

Graham added that he had been out of the country five weeks; "I don't know the mood of the country; I do not know all the facts. It would be very foolish of me to comment further."

He also said: "I think what we ought to do is pray for all our leaders . . . If McGovern had been President I would be praying for him and supporting him as much as I could."

Graham was escorted by eight armed guards, which a church official said the church had hired for "crowd control."