

# Transformations in Madison Square Garden as Throngs Hear Evangelist

This is the first of four dispatches by the religious writer of the United Press on Billy Graham's New York crusade. Today's dispatch takes you to a typical Graham meeting.

**By LOUIS CASSELS**  
United Press Correspondent  
New York—As you turn off Broadway onto West 49th st., you see the first sign that something strange is happening in the big city.



A poster hung in the window of a neon-lighted bar urges you to "attend the Billy Graham Crusade."

A block farther, the lighted marquee of Madison Square Garden comes into view. In the same bold letters that have announced prize fights and circuses, it proclaims:

Nightly at 7:30... Billy Graham New York Crusade... air conditioned... all seats free.

It is not yet 7 p.m., but a long line already stands outside the main entrance. No ticket is needed to get in. Although some sections are reserved for church-sponsored delegations, at least half of the 18,500 seats are held open each night for people who just walk in.

**Subtle Transformations**

As the well-mannered crowd moves inside, you notice that the garden has undergone a few subtle transformations. Strips of cardboard cover the beer signs. A Bible shop has been set up in a checkroom.

At the west end of the garden is a big platform, about 10 feet above the arena floor. Decorated with potted plants, it is furnished with chairs, an electric organ and a piano. On a narrow prom-

ontory extending from the front of the platform, surrounded by a wrought iron fence, is the mahogany pulpit.

From the front of the pulpit to the first row of folding chairs is a 30-foot space—room for several hundred people to stand. The rows of chairs are divided by aisles. Some sections are marked with signs—reserved for counselors, for ministers, for the blind, for the deaf (to whom the sermon is translated by an expert in sign language.)

No one tells you not to smoke, but you sense that it wouldn't be appropriate. And as you look around the fast-filling auditorium, you notice there is remarkable unanimity on this conclusion. Throughout the two hours you are in the garden, you will not see a single match-flare in the distant darkened balconies.

**All Wait Expectantly**

You also will listen in vain for the coughing, whispering, throat-clearing and chair scraping that usually go with a big crowd. These people have come to witness, or perhaps to experience, religious conversion, and they are waiting... some reverently, some curiously, all quietly and expectantly.

There is a paper-bound "crusade hymnal" on your seat, and promptly at 7:30 choir director Cliff Barrows tells you to turn to page 38. The choir—800 women in white blouses, 700 men in white shirts—swells out in the familiar words of "Blessed Assurance." Barrows gently coaxes you to join in... "There's a Blessing If You Sing..." and soon the whole crowd is singing.

Two more hymns... a prayer by a local minister... a vocal solo by George Beverly Shea... the Scriptures is read by an English clergyman... the of-

fering is taken up in cardboard ice buckets. So far the service has been—except for the sheer size of choir and congregation—just what you'd find in any Baptist church on Sunday morning.

You have been waiting for Graham to make a dramatic entrance. But now you spot him sitting there on the platform, taking part in the preliminaries like everyone else. At 8:10 p.m. without fanfare or introduction. He gets up and walks quietly to the pulpit.

**Portable Microphone**

He is, as advertised, a handsome man, with hawklike features and wavy blond hair that makes him look younger than his 38 years. His suit is well-tailored, perfectly pressed.

He holds a limp-backed Bible in his left hand and from it he reads his text in a loud, clear voice that never reaches a shout. A portable microphone hidden in his tie clasp carries his voice to the loudspeaker system.

He moves back and forth across the platform as he talks. He gestures frequently and vividly... you count 23 different hand movements in the space of one minute.

Many people, including Graham, have observed that he is not an especially eloquent preacher. His prose is lucid, grammatically correct, but rarely distinguished by an elegant turn of phrase. Neither his voice nor his manner could be described as spellbinding yet he commands the attention of an audience as few preachers are able to do.

You have been told it is his "sincerity" that impresses you. But you soon realize this is too pale a term. What comes through as you listen to Billy Graham in the hushed stillness of Madison Square Garden is not merely

sincerity, but passionate, contagious conviction.

**Tone of Urgency**

He does not strive for emotionalism through calculated effect... he seems to bend over backwards to avoid that charge which was laid at the door of so many earlier evangelists. But there is a tone of urgency to his message, an emphasis on the eternal and ultimate importance of "the decision you will reach here tonight," which must have a powerful emotional impact on any but the most confident Christian... or the most impenetrable agnostic.

The message, tonight is always, is the Christian plan of salvation, as Graham reads it in his Bible... adorned—or undiluted—by the insights of modern theology.

"We are all sinners," he declares again and again. Abundantly documenting this fact are examples of the pride, lust, selfishness, greed and worldliness which infect the lives of all men... even the pious... "including the speaker."

And "the wages of sin is death," Graham does not invoke the image of everlasting fire, but neither does he pass lightly over the doctrine of final judgment and the "sentence of eternal death" which awaits the unrepentant sinner.

It is only when the dark alternative has been painted that Graham proclaims the "good news" of the gospel.

**"He Bore Our Sins"**

God has sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem mankind from its self-condemnation, Graham intones. When Jesus died on the cross, "in a mysterious and glorious way that theologians can explain, he bore our sins." If we will accept his sacrifice on our behalf, will "receive him" into

our hearts as Lord and Master, we will "pass from death into life"... an eternal life of power and peace and joy."

Now the evangelist is inviting you to make your "decision for Christ" tonight... now "before you leave this building."

"I am going to ask you to get out of your seat and come quietly down here to the front... as an indication of your decision," the words pour out. "Just get up and come quietly... come now." The choir begins to sing softly. It is the old revival hymn, "Just As I Am, Without One Plea." For an excruciatingly long minute, it seems that this time, no one is coming forward.

**Too Many to Count**

Then a teen-age boy walks forward, sobbing quietly. An elderly man with gleaming bald head comes from the side. There is a smartly dressed woman in a mink stole... and a platinum blonde who could be a show girl... a tough-looking kid in a leather jacket and ducktail haircut... a boy and girl holding hands... now they are coming by fives and tens... too many to count...

A few have tears on their cheeks... A few are smiling nervously... most of them are solemn, quiet, their heads bowed. They seem to represent every age, sex and race... every economic bracket.

You may still have reservations about why they are there... or whether their "conversion" will last. But they plainly evident fact is that they are there, hundreds of them, and so far as anyone can judge by outward appearance, they are utterly sincere.

It is a deeply moving sight. Tomorrow: Is Bill Graham's crusade a success?

**"BAGGED" AN ELK**

East Rutherford, N.J.—Mrs. Jerome Harris reported to police that someone had stolen a bag of laundry from her back porch. Officers learned that a volunteer from the Lyndhurst Elks Lodge had mistaken Mrs. Harris' home for another and picked up her laundry as a clothing drive donation.

Wednesday, June 12, 1957

MEDFORD (OREGON) MAIL TRIBUNE—SEVEN

## Service Center at Blind School Opens

Portland — A \$200,000 service center and industrial school for blind persons was dedicated here Tuesday night.

Named the Ella Munro Burdick Memorial Center for the Blind, the modern structure was built mainly with funds bequeathed in 1847 for the needy blind by Mrs. Burdick.

The center provides space for meetings and offices for the commission for the blind, as well as shop space for industries conducted by the commission. No tax money was used in the construction.

Mayor Terry Schunk, in a welcoming address, said "This building is going to help some of our citizens to help themselves. None of us want charity. All we want is the opportunity to do something constructive."

## Portland Rabbi Speaks at Southern Oregon

Ashland — Rabbi Joshua Stampfer, of Congregation Ahavai Shalom in Portland addressed students and faculty members at Southern Oregon college at a summer assembly today. Rabbi Stampfer also delivered several class lectures at the college.

The rabbi lectures on college campuses under the auspices of an organization disseminating information concerning Judaism as part of an educational program.

Dead line Sunday Classified is at noon Saturday; 10 a.m. Monday for Monday; other days 5:30 previous day.

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## City-County Structure Visioned in Portland

Portland — City planning director Lloyd Keefe advised the city council here to buy a downtown business block between the city hall and the Multnomah county courthouse yesterday, envisioning a new city-county structure connected by tunnels.

Keefe estimated a half-block initial purchase would cost about \$200,000. Two Portland city councilmen, William A. Bowes and Ormond R. Bean, said they heartily approved Keefe's idea. They added however, they would not approve the construction of a temporary building to relieve city hall space shortages.

## Earthquakes Rock North, Central Luzon

Manila — Earthquakes ranging from feeble to strong rocked Northern and Central Luzon Island for several seconds today.

The Department of Volcanology here said the quakes were tectonic (slipping of a fault in the earth's crust) and that the epicenter was some 220 miles northwest of Manila.

No damage to property was reported immediately, but experts expected damage to poorly constructed buildings to be reported later today.

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