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Graham Crusade In Japan
Opens With Overflow Crowds

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TOKYO (BP)--Evangelist Billy Graham drew overflow crowds for his Crusade International in the opening sessions, despite being previously "virtually unknown" in Japan.

During the first five days of the crusade, more than 9,000 Japanese responded to the Baptist evangelist's invitation "to decide for Jesus Christ as your only God, denying all other gods."

Graham drew 92,750 persons to the Budokan sports arena built for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics.

A top Baptist leader in Japan had high praise for Graham's evangelistic campaign.

"I believe there will be a new enthusiasm for evangelism in Japan and our Christian churches will never be the same again," observed Shuichi Matsumura, Japanese crusade leader and vice president of the Baptist World Alliance.

It is Graham's first crusade in Japan, although he had hoped to participate in the 1961 Japan Baptist New Life Movement which Texas Baptists helped to co-sponsor. Posters used to promote the 1961 meeting in Tokyo used Graham's photograph, but he was forced to cancel after they were printed and used.

Attendance and response during the first five days of the Graham crusade ended speculation that Graham, because he was "virtually unknown" in Japan, might not draw the masses to the crusade.

"It is the largest percentage response in the first five days I've seen in any of our crusades in any place in the world," Graham said.

Crusade leaders noted the impact of the crusade on some struggling Japanese Christian churches and some individuals, citing especially the Kamimachi Church located in the outskirts of Tokyo.

The four-year-old Kamimachi church increased its membership by 50 per cent during the first three days of the crusade. Previously, it had a membership of 20 persons, but membership increased to 30 persons, with eight of the 10 new members being students at Showa University near the church.

One of two plainclothes detectives assigned by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police was one of more than 9,000 inquirers. He made his "decision for Christ" in the first meeting.

From statistics, the greatest audience support seems to be coming from young people, ages 19 to 29, most of them students. There are an estimated one-half million such students in Tokyo.

This group of students comprises the largest number of those making "decisions" in the crusade services.

More than 3,000 teenagers were turned away from a Saturday afternoon special youth meeting when Graham teamed with former New York Yankee second-baseman Bobby Richardson (a Baptist) of Sumter, S. C.; and London pop singer Cliff Richard.

Crusade attendance during the first five days saw a high of 17,500 and a low of 14,000.

More than 3,000 participated in the largest Billy Graham School of Evangelism ever held. The number represents nearly one-half of all the Christian workers in Japan.

The crusade was scheduled to close Oct. 29, with the final service set in Korakeun baseball stadium which seats 45,000 persons.

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Baptist Press

Indiana American Baptists
Vote Crusade Participation

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MUNCIE, Ind. (BP)--The Indiana Baptist Convention (American Baptist) at its annual meeting here voted to participate in the Crusade of the Americas.

Earlier, the American Baptist Convention General Council had voted not to participate in the 1969 hemispheric-wide evangelistic effort on a nation-wide basis.

According to Marvin Utter, of Indianapolis, president of the Indiana Baptist Convention, American Baptist state conventions in Michigan and Southern California are considering similar steps. American Baptists in West Virginia have also indicated an interest in participating in the crusade.

The Indiana Baptist Convention's evangelism division recommended participation in the Crusade of the Americas. It urged "that Indiana Baptists cooperate with the spirit and purpose of the Crusade of the Americas."

It also recommended that the convention plan a program "on our own, simultaneous with the crusade being conducted by our fellow Baptists in other conventions."

Plans included in the recommendation are area revivals in the spring of 1968, major emphasis on all forms of evangelism in 1968, culminating in the hope of an evangelistic effort in each local church in November of 1969.

The General Council of the American Baptist Convention voted in November of 1966 against participating in the Crusade of Americas on a national basis, deciding instead to have a special emphasis in 1969 on a new church curriculum called "The Christian Faith and Work Plan."

The General Council left the door open for state conventions to participate if they so desired.

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Lubbock Woman Named
Texas PR Award Winner

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LUBBOCK, Tex. (BP)--Mrs. Opal Dixon, religion editor of the Lubbock Avalanche Journal, has been named recipient of the 1967 Texas Baptist Public Relations Award.

The Methodist woman was to receive the award during the 82nd annual meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Texas here.

Mrs. Dixon, an active member of the official board of Lubbock's First Methodist Church, was cited for her long tenure of service as religion editor of the Lubbock Avalanche Journal and her coverage of all religious denominations. She has been a staff writer for the daily paper here since 1934.

The award is presented annually to a person in public relations or journalism who is judged to have made an outstanding contribution in communications concerning religion. The public relations advisory committee of the Baptist General Convention of Texas makes the selection.

The award was to be presented (Nov. 2) by John Earl Seelig, chairman of the committee and assistant to the president at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

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