

Franklin Graham Addresses His “Campaign for God”

Evangelist Franklin Graham is launching a nationwide effort to urge Christians to get out and vote in 2016, but the son of the legendary Billy Graham isn't backing any one candidate or party, insisting his aim is to launch a “campaign for God.”

In an exclusive interview with *NBC News* in Des Moines, Iowa, on the opening day of his Decision America tour, Graham said his only goal is to get Americans who identify as Christian and didn't vote in the last election to become engaged in the political process.

“We need to get Christians to run for office. We need Christians to vote for politicians that stand for biblical principles and biblical truth,” Graham said.

Graham is planning a 50-state bus tour to spread his message preaching political engagement this election year. After his first stop in Des Moines, he is headed to New Hampshire, also an early nominating state, and then on to Louisiana.

Graham insisted that he wouldn't endorse a candidate even though he has backed Republican presidential candidates in the past and has written favorably about Republican front-runner Donald Trump in the past. On his Facebook page he said he admired Trump for shaking up the political process.

“This is not about Donald Trump,” Graham said. “I'm here running a campaign for God.”

Graham did repeat one of Trump's favorite observations about political correctness. “This political correctness, everybody's afraid of offending somebody or saying something that's going to turn somebody else off. I mean, it's terrible,” Graham said.

Graham wouldn't comment on Trump's commitment to God but said it's up to voters to decide.

"You may have two candidates out there that may be heathens who end up running against each other and you'll just have to decide which is the less of the two heathens," Graham said. "It may not always be clear, is what I'm saying, and a person is gonna have to make up their minds and they'll have to make that choice, and I'm not gonna do that for them."

Recently Graham has also come out in support of some of Trump's positions, including his ban on Muslims entering the U.S. Graham denied being against Islam but said the U.S. was built on Judeo-Christian values. "I want those principles re-introduced," he said. "I'm going to urge Christians to vote. That's what this is all about. It's not about Islam."

In the interview, Graham decried a government that he says has become too secular, pointing to the lack of prayer in schools, the absence of the Ten Commandments in public places and the bickering in Washington.

"Secularism and Communism are no different," he said. "Secularism slowly crept into local politics, state politics, the federal government and Communism—there is not difference as it relates to God. Both are godless."

Even though Christian conservatives tend to vote Republican, Graham said he's working outside any political party because the Republicans are just as disappointing as the Democrats.

"I'm very unhappy with the entire political process—Democrats and Republicans," he said. "I have no hope in the Democratic Party and I don't have any hope in the Republican Party and turning this system around ... We need to get Christian men and women into Washington. Otherwise, without Almighty God, I promise you, I don't see any hope for this country."

He addressed concerns on his Facebook page that he is leaving

the Republican Party.

"Some fear I might be leading an exodus out of the Republican Party. That's not my goal at all. I'm not here to hurt the Republican Party or the Democratic Party—I want to help our nation," he wrote.

On the day President Barack Obama announced new executive actions on guns, Graham said he understands where the president is coming from.

"I feel a little bit of the concern the president does for when he talks about gun violence," Graham said.

He doesn't agree with how Obama's addressing it though.

"He's just looking in the wrong place. He's going in the wrong direction," Graham said. "The problem in America today is the gun culture that we have, which is created a lot by the entertainment industry."