

Pastor Says All Share Watergate Guilt



DR. WILLIAM A. HOLMES
... asks for contrition

By Jane Rippeteau
Washington Post Staff Writer

The pastor of National United Methodist Church, Metropolitan Memorial, where former President Nixon used to worship, told the congregation yesterday that all Americans share in the responsibility for the events that led to the President's resignation and said there is need for each to make a genuine and viable confession of wrongdoing.

The pastor, Dr. William A. Holmes, told 300 members of his congregation at the 11 a.m. service yesterday that Americans share in the President's experience be-

cause of the all-encompassing nature of the office.

Mr. Nixon and his family regularly attended services at the spacious Gothic church, located at Nebraska and New Mexico Avenues NW, between 1952 and 1960. The Nixon daughters, Tricia and Julie, while not members, attended Sunday school there and were members of a church-affiliated Girl Scout troop.

The Nixons attended the church while Dr. Edward Gardiner Latch was pastor. Dr. Latch is now chaplain of the House of Representatives.

"I am aware that Richard

Nixon and his family were active for several years in the life of this congregation," Dr. Holmes told the congregation. "Some members of our congregation knew the humanity of the Nixon family on a personal basis. I can think of nothing more appropriate . . . this morning than to try and interpret the events of last week from a Christian point of view."

Dr. Holmes based his extemporaneous sermon on Isaiah 6, 1-8, which begins, "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord . . ." and continues, "the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, . . . and I said: 'Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.'"

"We can see God's judgment on our lives these last few days and weeks," Dr. Holmes said. "I am less interested in the editorial debate on how contrite Richard Nixon is. But I am interested immensely in how contrite we are . . . I do not think it is the time to separate the good guys from the bad."

Later in the sermon he said, "The office of the President of the United States does not belong to one man, but to all the people. That means to some extent the resignation of a president is my resignation, too, and the events which occasioned the impeachment process were my events."

"To the extent that the people of the United States feel that Richard Nixon has let them down, then to that extent, for their own souls' sake, the people of the United States need to find mercy and forgiveness for Richard Nixon."

Dr. Holmes, his wife Nancy and sons, Will, 18, and Chris, 17, moved here from Austin, Tex., in June at the invitation of Washington Methodist Bishop James K. Mathews. Dr. Holmes replaces Dr. Merrill W. Drennan, who became a Washington district superintendent.

Dr. Holmes is former pastor of the University Methodist Church at the University of Texas in Austin.

Moscow Pledges Continued Effort To Improve Relations With U.S.

From News Dispatches

MOSCOW, Aug. 11—The Soviet Union pledged today to continue its policy of detente and to seek a further improvement of Soviet-American relations with President Ford.

In its first public statement on the future of Soviet-American relations since the resignation of Mr. Nixon, Pravda said, "The Soviet Union will continue in the future to maintain with firmness and persistence a policy line toward further improvement of Soviet-American relations."

The thing to do now, Pravda said, "is to observe unwaveringly the agreements concluded earlier and to fulfill the pledges in their order." Pravda was evidently expressing the hope that a Ford administration, unencumbered by a Watergate crisis, will be able to persuade Congress to approve the 1972 Soviet-American trade pact and open the way to large U.S. credit loans for Moscow.

The trade agreement and its key item—most-favored-nation trading status—have been blocked by Congress, which has tried to force the Soviet Union to ease its emigration policies.

Pravda cautioned Soviet readers that opponents to detente remain, and that "certain American circles . . . may even try to block the path of the Soviet-American relationship with the Watergate

affair." The paper did not elaborate.

Pravda said the change of presidents was "America's" internal affair," but an event which other countries cannot ignore.

"The destiny of the world depends to a large degree on the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. and the process of detente," Pravda said. The Soviet media have provided Russians with little information on President Ford, but such details are rarely discussed publicly in this country.

"The Soviets welcomed with satisfaction President Ford's declarations and those by representatives of the business world that they intended to work for peace and cooperation with the Soviet Union. The task consists of exploiting and developing the success already obtained, thanks to the efforts of the two parties to resolutely end all attempts to set up obstacles on this path," Pravda said.

East Germany Warns Against Bonn Reprisals

Reuter

EAST BERLIN, Aug. 11—East Germany today indirectly threatened reprisals if West Germany retaliates against the slow-downs imposed by East Germany on the highway

links between West Germany and West Berlin.

The official ADN news agency quoted West German press reports as saying the Bonn government was considering not renewing the interest-free loan granted to East Germany under a preferential trade agreement.

The agreement expires at the end of 1975, but ADN said East German authorities were warning that a refusal to renew would be regarded as a breach of the 1972 normalization treaty between the two Germans.

"It is quite clear that such a stance by West Germany would not remain without consequences," ADN said.

Last month, ADN warned in similar style that the establishment of a West German environmental protection office in West Berlin would not pass "without consequences."

Easy Germany then introduced spot-checks on the access roads to West Berlin, contending that establishing the federal office in the Western sector contravened the 1971 four-power Berlin agreement.

This drew protests from the West that East Germany was violating the same accord, which stipulates that traffic should pass unimpeded along the transit routes.

In Bonn, West German officials said there had been no interference with travelers using the access routes to West Berlin for the past several days.