

Minister Says President Nixon Lied to Him

KEY BISCAIYNE, Fla., Aug. 9 (UPI)—The preacher, Richard M. Nixon most often listened to in 1973 on his frequent visits to Key Biscayne, said the former President lied to him and was "not morally qualified to continue as President."

The Rev. John Huffman Jr. commented on his former private talks with Mr. Nixon Thursday night about three hours before Mr. Nixon announced his resignation as President.

In the spring of 1973, Mr. Huffman was pastor of the Key Biscayne Presbyterian Church, located a short distance from the Nixons' Florida home. Mr. Huffman since has been transferred to Pittsburgh.

Huffman preached an Easter sermon in 1973 on sin and morality which was given wide distribution by news media and interpreted as being directed at the Watergate scandal. Mr. Nixon and his family sat in the forth row pew during the sermon.

"Nixon conveyed his thoughts to me" after the sermon, Mr. Huffman said, "...at which time he gave me absolute assurance that he was not at all involved [in Watergate] and was going to the very heart of the problem and would bring the full facts out into the open, although it would take time.

"I believed him, and his recent revelations have convinced me he lied in what I took as a very serious conversation," Mr. Huffman said. "Obviously now, it becomes apparent that for over two years he has been lying to the American people.

"My heart bleeds for Mrs. Nixon and the girls, as well as for the President, in their agony," said Mr. Huffman. "But as a man who was elected on a law-and-order platform, who gave every outward appearance of personal and religious piety, I believe that justice is being served and that he is not morally qualified to continue as President."



Photos by Frank Johnston—The Washington Post

Former congressional colleague Melvin R. Laird, right, applauds President-to-be Ford and Mrs. Ford before ceremony.