

# Clergymen Differ in

By Marjorie Hyer

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Clergymen of four different denominations, all of whom consider themselves personal pastors to President Nixon, have expressed different reactions to the revelations of the White House transcripts.

The Rev. T. Eugene Coffin, pastor of the East Whittier (Calif.) Friends Church where the President is a nominal member, said he had not read the full transcripts and would not comment "out of context."

He added that "what I have read is disturbing."

Mr. Coffin, who was invited by President Nixon to participate in his 1973 inaugural, said he was "concerned about this sort of revelation—that the President felt pressured to do it because he felt it would settle the issue. I'm not sure it will do it."

He pointed out that "the tapes were made not for public consumption. They were made for purposes of

history, but not for public consumption."

The Quaker pastor said, "I think other things besides campaign abuses are involved in the Watergate investigation."

He cited "an attempt to get rid of Nixon" on the part of "forces" that had failed to defeat the President at the polls.

Evangelist Billy Graham said he was still reading the transcripts and that he "really would like to think it through before I do" comment on them.

He volunteered that he had been "unpleasantly surprised in some areas," from the material that he has read.

The most critical of the President's pastors was the Rev. John Huffman, whose Key Biscayne, Fla., Presbyterian Church the President sometimes attended when he was at the Florida White House.

Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, Pa., since last November, Mr. Huffman said that "as a pastor and friend"

of the President, "I bleed for him in his difficult situation."

"Yet as one who must faithfully declare the word of God, I call for him to repent publicly and accept the forgiveness of Jesus Christ and the American people for the apparent moral and spiritual compromise indicated in his transcripts."

Mr. Huffman stressed that "they are his transcripts, they are not something put out by the Washington Post."

If the President took such a course, the Presbyterian pastor said, hopefully, he can be restored to his position of world leadership."

Mr. Huffman, who had earlier declined to comment on the transcripts because of "pastoral relationships," presumably with the President, said he has sent a copy of his statement about repentance to the secretary of Gen. Alexander Haig, the President's chief of staff.

He said he has not spoken with the President since the

Easter Sunday service a year ago when, with the Presidential party in the pews, he preached what some described as a "pointed" sermon on the need to admit mistakes.

Like other pastors queried, Mr. Huffman indicated that whatever misdeeds were indicated by the White House transcripts, they were reflections of moral flaws in society as a whole.

"But I don't think that's any excuse for low morals in political leadership," the pastor said.

He said he believed that "Chappaquiddick represents moral questions just as important as other cover-ups, including Watergate."

In his view, he said, questions remaining after the court investigation of the accident in which an aide to Sen. Edward Kennedy was drowned on Martha's Vineyard in the summer of 1969 was, he said "on a par" with Watergate.

"If Kennedy is a major contender for 1976, he needs the same scrutiny" as Presi-

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## Reactions to Nixon Transcripts



T. EUGENE COFFIN



JOHN HUFFMAN



BILLY GRAHAM



NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

... preachers to the President offer varied assessments.

dent Nixon is receiving, Mr. Huffman asserted.

The Rev. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, pastor of Marble Collegiate Church in New

York City and a popular White House preacher, refused through a press aide to make any comment on the White House transcripts.