

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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76-214

Millions Are Misled
About FCC Petition

By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--Have you heard that a famous atheist is petitioning the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to ban religious broadcasting?

The unfounded fear of maybe 20 or 30 million church people about this non-existent possibility is the most amazing phenomenon I have witnessed in 19 years of news reporting from the nation's capital.

Yes, that many people have either written or signed petitions asking the FCC not to agree to an imaginary petition by Madalyn Murray O'Hair to ban religious broadcasting.

Such a petition by Mrs. O'Hair does not even exist. Neither is there any other petition before the FCC to ban religious broadcasting. That is what makes this story so amazing.

If this story were not so ridiculous and tragic, it would be hilariously funny. In fact, I imagine that the perpetrators of this colossal hoax (whoever they are) can hardly contain their mirth at the gullibility of so many church people and the irresponsibility of so many broadcasters, newspapers and organizations.

If you want to stop wasting your time, if you want to help preserve the Christian witness in public affairs, if you want to maintain respect as a responsible communicator, then, for goodness sake, do your best to stop this silly outburst of fear about a non-existent threat to religious broadcasting.

Please, my friends, let's stop this FCC petition business and move on with a genuine witness to the Christian gospel and its significance for the important problems people face.

Once again we give you the facts.

In December 1974, two California men, Jeremy D. Lansman and Lorenzo W. Milam filed petition RM 2493 with the FCC. In this lengthy document they asked the FCC to issue rulings that would freeze the assignment of additional educational television or FM radio licenses to individuals or groups planning to air only religious or quasi-religious programs.

Almost immediately this petition was misunderstood, misinterpreted, twisted, distorted, misrepresented and used to generate an extensive mail campaign directed at the FCC. The effect of these appeals was electric. Within a few brief months hundreds of thousands of letters poured into the FCC mail room. Most of these were based on misinformation. Only a few people had taken the trouble to find the facts and to address the real questions.

On Aug. 1, 1975, the FCC in a unanimous action denied the requests made in the petition. It issued an 11-page statement explaining the reasons the requests were denied. This action of the FCC was made public on Aug. 13, 1975. The information was carried on the nation's wire services. Articles appeared in newspapers, magazines and the religious press. Once again we thought we had slain the dragon of misinformation, rumor, myth and hysteria.

But the dragon refused to die.

For a while the volume of mail at the FCC declined, but now a year-and-a-half after the FCC effectively and permanently killed the petition, the mail has begun again to escalate, so much so that two new employees in the FCC mail room have been hired to do nothing but open and count the letters.

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The total number of pieces of mail processed by the FCC mail room has now reached nearly 4 1/2 million. In November 1976, alone, 81,000 pieces of mail were received in 20 working days. This mail count does not include the hundreds of thousands of letters that have been received by the individual FCC commissioners nor the mail that has been sent to members of Congress.

Often included in the mail are petitions signed by multiplied thousands of persons in churches, schools and civic organizations. Many signatures were obtained by individuals who have been frightened by misinformation that religious broadcasting is in jeopardy. No one really knows how many names are on these petitions, because the FCC does not have the resources to process them. We have estimated that there are 20 to 30 million names, but others believe that the number is much higher.

A spokesman in the FCC said in an interview that, as of the end of November 1976, it had cost \$568,620 in postage to send this mail. Add to this the time, money and energy many people have spent on this false issue, and we begin to see how much has been wasted.

Now let us look at some of the non-facts or myths about FCC petition RM 2493.

Myth: This is a project of Madalyn Murray O'Hair to stop religious broadcasting on radio and television.

Fact: Mrs. O'Hair does not now and never has had any connections in any way with RM 2493, according to a statement by a highly placed official in the FCC. This fact was confirmed last year by a personal telephone call to Mrs. O'Hair by John W. Baker, director of research services for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Myth: Mrs. O'Hair has been granted a hearing before the FCC to present 27,000 signatures in support of RM 2493.

Fact: This is not true. She has not requested such a hearing. Several years ago, she did present a petition with 27,000 signatures to NASA in an attempt to stop astronauts from praying and reading the Bible from outer space. This effort died in the courts in 1971.

Myth: "This petition RM 2493 would ultimately pave the way to eliminate the proclamation of the gospel via airways of America."

Fact: The petition had nothing to do with commercial broadcasting which is the main channel for religious broadcasting in America. Besides that, the FCC must abide by the provisions of the Constitution of the United States, which guarantees the freedom of religion.

Myth: "If Mrs. O'Hair's attempt is successful, all Sunday worship services currently being broadcast either by radio or television would cease."

Fact: This is plain hogwash.

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Court Upholds Equal Rights
For Young Beer Drinkers

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press
12/21/76

WASHINGTON (BP)--Young men in the 18-20-year-old age bracket may not be denied the right to purchase so-called 3.2 percent beer when young women of the same age are allowed to do so, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled here.

In a 7-2 decision, the high court struck down an Oklahoma law which the state held was enacted for traffic safety purposes. The law forbade the sale of the "nonintoxicating" 3.2 beer to 18-20 year-old males on grounds that statistical evidence showed them more likely to drive while drunk and be involved in fatal accidents than women of their age.

The Oklahoma law was challenged in a federal district court by a group of students at Oklahoma State University and by the owner of a Stillwater, Okla., store which sells beer. Their attorneys argued that the law violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and amounted to "invidious" discrimination.

Writing for the seven-man majority, Justice William J. Brennan acknowledged that while "the protection of public health and safety represents an important function of state and local governments," Oklahoma's statistical evidence "cannot support the conclusion that the gender-based distinction closely serves to achieve that objective."

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Statistics used by the state to defend the law included an analysis of arrest records for 1973 showing that 18-20 year-old males were arrested for drunk driving more often than females of the same age. Likewise, fatalities among young males was substantially higher than for the women.

The court majority disputed the statistics, however, pointing out that the state's evidence dealt with drunk driving generally, and not that brought on by over-consumption of 3.2 beer itself. Brennan also noted that the law is of questionable value in that it forbids the sale of 3.2 beer to young men but not its consumption, allowing their "female companions" to purchase it for them.

Four of the seven justices voting to strike down the Oklahoma law issued separate concurring opinions. Justice Potter Stewart was the only member of the majority to say that the "disparity" in the law amounted to "total irrationality." He said that the statistics used by the state "wholly fail to prove or even suggest that 3.2 beer is somehow more deleterious when it comes into the hands of a male aged 18-20 than of a female of like age."

Justice John Paul Stevens also criticized the law, stating that "it is difficult to believe that the statute was actually intended to cope with the problem of traffic safety, since it has only a minimal effect on access to a not-very-intoxicating beverage and does not prohibit its consumption."

Stevens also called the law an "insult to all of the young men of the state" and said that "visiting the sins of the 2 percent on the 98 percent" is not justified.

The two dissenters were Chief Justice Warren E. Burger and Justice William H. Rehnquist. In a 12-page statement, Rehnquist argued that Oklahoma's law has a "rational" basis which the high court should have seized to avoid striking it down.

Past court policy, Rehnquist said, dictates that the justices apply either the rationality standard or that of "compelling state interest." He accused the majority of creating a new category "out of thin air."

He defended Oklahoma's use of statistical evidence, saying that a state legislature in enacting a new law should not "be subjected to the judicial equivalent of a doctoral examination in statistics."

Small Colorado Church Gives
\$10,000 in Lottie Moon Gifts

By Teresa Shields

GOLDEN, COLO. (BP)--North Golden Baptist Church here, which has an average attendance on Sunday mornings of about 100, increased their Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions from \$100 last year to \$5,000 this year.

They collected over \$10,000.

The pastor and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Gary R. Tallman, were appointed in December as Southern Baptist missionaries to Rhodesia. They feel they are in the midst of a miracle.

"When the Oellers came back into the service on Sunday, Dec. 5, and announced the results of \$10,355.47, we just rejoiced," Tallman exclaimed.

"Our people believe in sacrificial giving. They believe when God lays an amount on your heart, you're not supposed to ask him why or how, just give it.

"The people that belong to North Golden Baptist Church are not wealthy people," Tallman said. "The fact is, they are lower middle class, ordinary, common people that the Lord has started to deal with."

North Golden Baptist Church has been in existence for about 19 years, according to Tallman. For the last few years the church has been without a pastor.

In July, the church called Tallman as pastor. In October they voted to go on mission status because they needed trained leaders, Mrs. Tallman related.

Applewood Baptist Church, in nearby Denver, agreed to provide the leadership and leadership training for North Golden Church. Eight couples from Applewood Church, besides the Tallmans, minister at the mission.

The second mission of Applewood Church, North Golden was adopted when Applewood's first mission was constituted into a church in October. Applewood is a church with 600 average attendance and gave \$35,000 to the Lottie Moon Offering this year. The Tallmans are the fifth foreign missionary couple in five years to come from Applewood Church.

North Golden Baptist Church has never given over \$150 to the Lottie Moon Offering, Tallman said. The offering this year, he noted, is about 100 times last year's and exceeds the entire church budget for last year.

Before, the mission's Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) organization had set the Lottie Moon Offering goal, Tallman said. But this year, during the first Sunday morning prayer breakfast of the Brotherhood and Royal Ambassadors (Men's and Boys' mission organization) the 18 persons present felt the men should set the goal.

"We feel very strongly that the men of the church should get a vision and automatically their wives will come along," Tallman added.

"All the men had a real peace about setting the goal at \$5,000. We felt like the Lord had set the goal. We all just sat there and said, 'We know the Lord is laying this on our hearts. We don't understand how, but we know he's going to do it.'"

Besides the monetary giving, the people are also giving of themselves, according to Mrs. Tallman.

The Tallmans believe one of the reasons for the "renewal" in the church and the "miraculous" Lottie Moon Offering is prayer.

After an all-night prayer meeting on Oct. 2, Tallman said that the church "started really seeing results." He explained that they had been adding members all along, but after that many more began to come.

"I think the reason was people finally realized that they could have conversation with God. Since that time we've seen a lot of victory at North Golden."

Another reason, Mrs. Tallman said, is because the people have seen missions first hand. Several mission trips planned by Applewood Church have given North Golden members a chance to actually participate in World Evangelism Foundation crusades in France and Korea.

"Plus, we are going to Rhodesia," Mrs. Tallman stated. "The church feels like they have tithed us out of their congregation."

"This is a contact they will have with a missionary, to keep their vision alive of what it is like on the foreign mission field."

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state editors

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Church Said to Be Building
Largest Worship Center

Baptist Press
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PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--North Phoenix Baptist Church broke ground here on a new \$5.5 million facility described by church spokesman as the nation's largest worship center.

The new facility will be erected on a 40-acre plot purchased two years ago for \$2 million.

The \$5.5 million construction figure includes the fan-shaped building and furnishings, a spokesman said.

The facility is due for completion in Dec. 1977 and will seat about 5,300, he said. Distance from the farthest pew to the pulpit will be 149 feet, and all the pews, if they were lined in one row, would stretch 1½ miles, he noted.

A \$4 million bond program and "Together We Build" stewardship campaign, scheduled for early 1977, are expected to cover construction costs, the spokesman said.

The Baptist Beacon, weekly newsmagazine of Arizona Baptists, recently called North Phoenix Church the fastest growing church in the state.

In November, the church broke its own Sunday School attendance record with 3,032 persons attending, the Beacon quoted Richard A. Jackson, the church's pastor nine years.

The church went to a two Sunday School and three Sunday morning worship service format several months ago, a spokesman said.

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Canadian Baptists Name
Pastor Editor-elect

Baptist Press
12/21/76

TORONTO, Ontario, Canada (BP)--William H. Jones, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Oshawa, Ontario, has been named editor-elect of The Canadian Baptist, weekly news publication of the Baptist Federation of Canada.

Jones will succeed Harold U. Trinier, who retires June 30, 1977, after 27 years as editor of the newsmagazine.

The editor-elect attended New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, along with other institutions, and holds five degrees including the doctor of ministry degree.

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Soviet Baptists Note Growth,
Send Christmas Greetings

Baptist Press
12/21/76

MOSCOW (BP)--The All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB) in the Soviet Union noted the addition of more than 40 new churches, the "building or continued building of new houses of prayer in a number of localities," and extended their Christmas greetings around the world.

In a combined year-end report and Christmas greeting to Baptists around the world, the Soviet Baptists noted, according to European Baptist Press Service (EBPS):

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"We rejoice and thank God for the thousands of new members in local churches who have made a covenant with the Lord through water baptism" and that "new pastors were elected and ordained . . . in more than 100 churches.

"We kneel before the Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ, and in our prayers thank him for the blessed work which was done in the Lord's vineyard in our country this year."

The letter-report concludes with a prayer for the abundant blessing of God on the life and work of fellow Christians everywhere, and with an appeal to others to join prayers and efforts for peace, friendship and brotherhood on earth.

The new congregations referred to in the AUCECB report include Mennonite and Pentecostal churches and churches of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists, located in eight Soviet regions, EBPS said.

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Carter's Pastor to Lead
Inauguration Day Service

Baptist Press
12/21 /76

WASHINGTON (BP)--Plains Baptist Church Pastor Bruce Edwards will lead an ecumenical prayer service at the Lincoln Memorial the day a member of his congregation, President-elect Jimmy Carter is inaugurated, Jan. 20.

Martin Luther King Sr., father of the late civil rights leader is expected to preach, according to a report by Religious News Service (RNS).

Carter is not expected to attend the service which is sponsored by an ad hoc group of Washington religious leaders, Bardyl Tirana, inaugural committee co-chairperson told RNS.

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European Baptist Group
To Move Its Offices

ZURICH, Switzerland (BP)--The Council of the European Baptist Missionary Society (EBMS) voted to transfer the Society's secretariat (staff) from Hamburg, Germany, to Bad Homburg, and discussed possible areas of cooperation between the Portuguese Baptist Convention and the EBMS in a year-end session here.

The secretariat move is expected to take place in September, 1977, and will coincide with the opening of an office building for Baptists of the Federal Republic of Germany. The building will also house the EBMS offices, according to a report from European Baptist Press Service (EBPS).

Baptists of 10 European countries support 95 missionaries through the EBMS, chiefly in Cameroon and Sierra Leone.

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Grant Puts School Over Top
In \$5.5 Million Goals Drive

Baptist Press
12/21/76

ABILENE, Tex. (BP)--A \$1 million gift to Hardin Simmons University (H-SU), a Baptist school here, from the Cullen Foundation of Houston, was enough to exceed \$5.5 million "Profile for Progress" campaign goals, H-SU trustees noted here.

Then they voted to raise an additional \$500,000 to be sure the school's campus construction and beautification program "is done right."

The three-phase Profile for Progress called for the first step of \$2 million for a new library, reached in 1973 with a \$500,000 challenge gift from the J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation of Tulsa, Okla.

Phase Two sought \$2.5 million to build athletic facilities and to modernize several existing buildings. It was completed in summer, 1975, with help from a \$1 million challenge gift from the Mabee Foundation.

Phase Three, a \$1 million faculty endowment fund, received some \$553,000 in gifts and pledges until the Cullen grant and is now over its goal, a H-SU spokesman said.

H-SU trustees approved a recommendation from the Cullen Board that \$500,000 be applied to the faculty endowment fund and \$500,000 to current building projects, which include a new athletic-physical education complex.

The \$1 million grant from the Cullen Foundation actually puts the campaign over its original goals, but "inflation erosion calls for more," a school spokesman said.

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Radio-TV Awards Ceremony
To Fete Lady Bird Johnson

FORT WORTH (BP)--Mrs. Lyndon B. (Lady Bird) Johnson, the nation's former First Lady, will be spotlighted at the Eighth Annual Abe Lincoln Awards for distinguished broadcasters here.

The awards ceremony, to be held Feb. 17, 1977, at Tarrant County Convention Center here, will honor 11 broadcasters from across the country, in addition to Mrs. Johnson and Grand Ole Opry comedian Jerry Clower.

The Abe Lincoln Awards, created by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, recognizes broadcasters for their contributions to the quality of life in the United States -- particularly in their community--both as individual citizens and industry representatives.

Mrs. Johnson will receive the commission's Distinguished Communications Medal (DCM). She will speak briefly, a spokesman for the Baptist agency said.

Clower, a Southern Baptist layman from Yazoo City, Miss., will receive the commission's Christian Service Award (CSA).

"Mrs. Johnson is being honored for her ability to communicate the concern she bears for the people of this nation," said Paul M. Stevens, Radio-TV Commission president.

"She is noted for her fight against poverty, racism and ignorance which she joined as her husband's teammate when they accepted the awesome burden of the presidency," Stevens said. "She is a gallant lady, and we honor ourselves when we honor her."

Previous DCM recipients include Robert W. Sarnoff, chairman of the board of NBC; the late Walt Disney; the late Edward R. Murrow of CBS; and Frank Stanton, former CBS president.

Clower will be awarded the CSA for "his willingness to use the nationwide forum his profession allows, to speak out clearly, positively, and with real appeal for Christian principles," Stevens said.

Three other persons have previously won CSA awards; actress-writer Dale Evans Rogers, astronaut James B. Irwin, and advertising executive Stan Freberg of Hollywood, Calif.

For the first time, the commission will present a new award named after Vincent T. Wasilewski, who has been president of the National Association of Broadcasters since 1965. The first recipient will be Grover C. Cobb, an active broadcaster for more than 30 years who died in 1975. Mrs. Cobb will accept the award.

Members of the choral group of Southern Baptist ministers of music, "Centurymen," heard regularly on the commission's "Night Song Program," will present a musical show, headlined by religious recording artists Robert Hale and Dean Wilder.

The two top Abe Lincoln Awards will be presented to broadcasters who have made paramount contributions in the fields of Radio and Television. Nine other Abe Lincoln Merit Award winners, all of equal importance, will be presented.

The finalists were chosen by an eight-member Abe Lincoln Awards selection committee composed of previous merit winners and other broadcasters.

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers

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Goerner Retires from FMB
After 19 Years of Service

Baptist Press
12/21/76

By Ruth Fowler

RICHMOND (BP)--H. Cornell Goerner is ending a 19-year-old love affair with the continent of Africa.

Goerner joined the staff of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in 1957 and took over duties as secretary for Europe, the Middle East and Africa in January 1958. His retirement is effective Dec. 31, 1976.

He has served missionaries as administrator, advisor, friend and counselor. The Liberian friendship ring on his left hand tells of the friendships made during this time. His wife wears a matching one symbolizing similar relationships she has formed as a vital part of their ministry to missionaries.

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The story of Goerner's mission career began when he accepted Christ as personal Savior and decided to go to seminary. Upon graduation from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., young Goerner had many options for the future.

He considered missionary service as a theology teacher in Romania. Goerner knew "God had called me to teach in a seminary" and thought Romania would be as good a place as any. But he was led away from Romania, to teaching missions at Southern Seminary.

As a missions professor, Goerner worked closely with the denomination's Home and Foreign Mission Boards. Over the years he developed a desire to see the foreign mission field firsthand so he could better teach the subject. This desire led him to Africa.

On his first visit--to Nigeria--in 1947, Goerner saw an emerging Africa, beginning to show signs of an industrial revolution.

In 1955, his second trip to Nigeria, revealed a new Africa alive with new business competing for the dollars of a young nation.

Something happened inside Goerner as he sat in the plane coming home to the United States. He felt a "new call from God" for his life.

Aloud he answered, "Whatever you want me to do to be a part of bringing Christ to this new Africa, I will do."

In a few months the chance came to serve.

While at the Foreign Mission Board home offices in Richmond, Goerner was asked to become area secretary for what was then called Europe, Africa and the Near East. George W. Sadler was retiring, and Goerner became his successor.

When Goerner took over the work, Southern Baptists had 329 missionaries in 11 countries spread over three continents. During his career, 17 new countries were entered as a direct result of his survey work and recommendations to the board.

In 1963, the number of missionaries had increased to 555, too much for one man. The area was divided into Europe and the Middle East to be headed by J.D. Hughey, and Goerner remained with his beloved Africa.

By 1973, the Africa area had grown to 632 missionaries and once again was too large. The two new areas were West Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa.

Remembering his first visits to Nigeria and the new work in the French-speaking nations of West Africa, Goerner elected to stay with West Africa. Davis L. Saunders was named secretary for Eastern and Southern Africa.

Growth was not confined to his area of work, Goerner noted. All over the world Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) missionary efforts were expanding and still are. Why?

"Southern Baptists are a biblically oriented people," Goerner explained. "They believe the Bible. They believe that men are lost, eternally lost, without Christ. Those who respond have a changed life, not only a better life, but a different life. There's an eternal difference."

It was the "eternal difference" Goerner was thinking about when he made that first commitment to do what he could to bring Christ to Africa. He has been a support and the leader for SBC missionaries serving in Africa, allowing them to preach and teach. But he has not neglected to go and preach and teach himself while visiting the missionaries.

Goerner smiled and said, "And could I say, too, that I could not have done this work without my wife. I have been away from home on the average of roughly four months out of every year.

"I couldn't have gone if I didn't feel I could leave home without worrying about her and our three daughters. She is much beloved by our missionaries. She's been a cooperating member of the team who enabled me to do my work."

Goerner will pursue a different calling in retirement. He plans to write a book about the biblical basis of missions, which he feels is the key to Southern Baptist mission success.



Inside Religion

Integrating a
President's Church

By Lester Kinsolving

PLAINS, Ga.(BP)--It was the first crisis since he came, miraculously, from near national anonymity of this virtual bend in the road, to win the presidency of the United States.

For Jimmy Carter's original power base was in his church, a part of the nation's largest Protestant denomination, the 13 million-member Southern Baptist Convention.

This is a denomination of extraordinarily dedicated, diligent and devout--yet fiercely independent--people whose keystone is the complete autonomy of the local church.

This includes even the right to practice racial segregation, as the Plains Baptist Church deacons had resolved to do in 1965 when deacon Jimmy Carter was able to muster only four other votes in opposition.

Now, as the result of a Hallowe'en stunt and 11th-hour election campaign plank by a black minister of another denomination (with long-established credentials as a hustler), the racial segregation policy of the president-elect's church was page-one news throughout the world.

President-elect Carter knew better than to try to dazzle or pressure this congregation with his new political rank. Indeed his pastor, Bruce Edwards, noted in one sermon:

"This church, though small (245 members), has done some great things. First, we have seen one of our members ordained to the ministry. Secondly, we have sent a missionary overseas. And third, one of our members has won the highest civil office in the land."

Jimmy Carter did not abandon his pastor when the deacons tried to fire Edwards because of his public opposition to their segregation resolution.

Despite his crushing schedule in the transition to the White House, Carter took the time to phone several people in Plains to ask them to vote to overrule the segregation resolution and the attempt to fire his pastor.

Carter was not aware that almost half a century ago, in the small Minnesota town of Kasson, a devoted Methodist minister was turned out of his pulpit. His name was Mondale, and one of his sons will become the new Vice President of the United States while another son, Lester Mondale, is a retired-minister who wrote a definitive book on clergy-firings entitled "Preachers in Purgatory."

It was not the president-elect, however, who integrated the Plains Baptist Church and kept the pastor from being fired. Instead, it was the simple but immensely moving eloquence of a newly appointed agricultural missionary, Jerome Ethredge, who is being sent to Togo in West Africa.

It was Ethredge who moved that the Plains Baptist Church be opened to all who want to worship Jesus Christ, "because," he said, "that is what I feel called of God to try to do in Africa."

That evening, having been supported by a clear majority of the congregation, including his presidential parishioner and his colleague, who is one of nearly 3,000 Southern Baptist overseas missionaries, Bruce Edwards preached to a congregation which included six rows of reporters from as far away as Brazil and England, and whose faces were something of a study--of big media--watching in wonderment as presidential history was made in a small church in a small town.

Edwards' text was from Isaiah: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint."