

Jimmy Carter Library
Exit Interview

Interview of: Dr. Robert Maddox, Special Assistant for Religious Affairs (Public Outreach: Anne Wexler's Office)
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INTERVIEW

Marie Allen: First, I'd like to ask you about your personal background, professional background. Understand you're a minister.

Robert Maddox: I'm a Southern Baptist Minister. I attended high school in Atlanta, Clarkston High School in Atlanta, Georgia, and went to Baylor University out in Texas. We're going to be in the Cotton Bowl. And then I did my basic seminary work at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth and finished there in 1963 and spent one very long year in Jacksonville, Florida, and in 1964 moved to the little bitty town of Vienna, Georgia. Austria thinks it's Vienna, ["Vee-enna"] but it's really Vienna ["Vy-enna"]. And that's where my whole Carter story begins.

I'd been there just a few weeks and had a phone call, and Jody Powell was on the line. Jody had grown up in Vienna and had gone to the Air Force Academy, and just before Christmas, for some reason or another that he and I talked about but we never decided, he cheated on a test at the Air Force Academy and promptly resigned. He turned himself in and resigned, and so he came home and he wanted to talk about all that. So for about three hours one Saturday night, we sat around on my boxes of books -- had not even unpacked -- and talked about Jody Powell. And long about -- well, of course, in 1966, Jimmy Carter from Plains, which is only 30 miles from Vienna, ran for governor.

Marie Allen: Let me go back and ask you about Jody again.

Robert Maddox: All right.

Marie Allen: Were you surprised that he would turn to you at that time? Did he -- he didn't know you at all?

Robert Maddox: I didn't know him, and he didn't know me, and that's probably why he turned to me. There were a lot of things on his mind that we talked about that he's probably not talked about anymore. He and I have never discussed them again. In fact, that is the only really substantive conversation I've ever had with him even though we have talked hundreds of times since then. Since that, he was -- has always been involved with Jimmy Carter, and there was just not a whole lot of time for chitchat.

Marie Allen: Were his family involved in your church?

Robert Maddox: Ancestral, all the way back. The Williamsons and the Powells go way

back in Dooly County, Georgia, in Vienna, Georgia, and I have remained very close to his mother and aunt. His father died, and his grandparents are both dead now. But I -- his mother is one of those great souls that every preacher needs, the young preacher needs, who encouraged me. If June was in attendance, I just felt like I did better because she really wanted to hear what I had to say. So I maintained my ties with Jody through the years as much through her as through Jody.

Marie Allen: Were you surprised that Jody overcame that problem and went on, or did you see in the need of discussion?

Robert Maddox: No, I didn't have any doubts that he would finish whatever he set his mind to. I had no idea of what he would do but didn't have any real doubts about that at all.

So when Carter ran in '66, and of course, I voted for him, and then along about 1967, I was going to be gone on vacation and needed somebody to preach for me. So Jimmy was known as a good lay preacher and had done some missionary work and all, so I just called -- called to Plains and talked with him and asked him to come over and preach, and he said he would. And he did it two summers. I was -- two times in '67 and '68, he came over and preached, and I was gone both times, of course.

And after I came to the White House, a few months after I came, I was introducing him to another preacher and the president said, "Did Bob tell you that I preached in his church?" And the friend said, "Yes." And the President said, "Did he also tell you that he was always gone when I came?" And he said, "Yeah, he told me that." But I was surprised that after 13 or 14 years, as many times as he spoke in all those years, that he remembered that, but he did.

So that's my first contact with Jimmy Carter, and it's funny, I hardly remember making the phone call. I remember making it, but I remember nothing else about it. In 1968, I resigned the church in Vienna and went to Atlanta to start a doctor's degree at Emory, and then in 1970, of course, he ran for governor and was elected.

In '71, I finished my course work at Emory and moved to North Georgia to the First Baptist Church of Calhoun, Georgia, and I'd been there about two years, and Jack Carter, the President's oldest son, and his new wife moved to Calhoun. Judy [Langford], his wife, had grown up in Calhoun. And when Jack finished law school at the University of Georgia, they decided to come back to Calhoun and he would practice law with Judy's father, J.B. Langford. And they joined the church, First Baptist Church Calhoun, and became very good friends.

Marie Allen: How would you describe them?

Robert Maddox: They -- Judy is a very bright, warm, sensitive person, real alert, just a lot of fun to be with. Jack is a lot of fun to be with but abrasive when he wants to be. He does not bear fools easily. We had very few chitchats, and we were together a lot, but

there was always nearly always some kind of heavy, substantive theological question like, "Tell me about original sin," or, "Explain predestination," or something like that. So we became very cordial friends and were together a whole lot.

Strangely enough, I never went to the governor's mansion. Never -- really looking back on it, hardly associated Jack with his daddy as the governor of Georgia. Never thought about going to any kind of state functions. It just never crossed my mind.

And then in late '74, Jack called me one day and said, "My dad's thinking of running for President," and I thought I knew what he meant, but I said, "President of what?" anyway. "So what do you think about it?" I said, "Yeah, he can do that. He could probably get elected." So then, of course, we followed the whole '74/'75/'76 run --

Marie Allen: Did Jack call you for any special reason, to ask for --

Robert Maddox: No, not really --

Marie Allen: -- any prayers or --

Robert Maddox: More of a feeler. Jack would ask for prayer without asking for prayer. Jack's -- no doubt at all that Jack feels a need for prayer, but he is the kind of person who would only with great reluctance say, "Pray for me," or "Pray for my father." But we would talk in those kinds of terms, and that was kind of the hidden statement, the hidden agenda there. He is a very free person in a lot of ways and yet inhibited in other ways. So he did not ask me to pray. Really was asking for, I think, an affirmation, an "Okay, yeah, that's not crazy" kind of thing.

So along in those years and when I was in Calhoun, I finished my degree at Emory and had just kind of put down my roots there. We were in Calhoun a total of eight years. Some of my background, education and all, is intertwined, looking back on it, with the Carters. I had no notion of that when I was going through it.

When I was in Atlanta, I was associate at Druid Hills Baptist Church in Atlanta, and Dr. Louie D. Newton was the retired minister but had known Carter for a good long time. One of the first things Governor Carter did after being inaugurated was to come to Druid Hills. Came on a Wednesday night and spoke to the dinner meeting, to the family night supper, and then spent about an hour, hour-and-a-half with a group of young people just rapping, talking, with a group of young people. And I was -- part of what I did was youth director, so I was in on that meeting, and it was a fascinating evening. The governor of the state talking with good depth about Reinhold Niebuhr really perked me up. I was in Emory and -- theological seminary at Emory so I was into that stuff pretty much, and I perceived in him a good depth of understanding about Niebuhr and the whole range of theology. He was not just repeating a religious line. I sensed that it was very important to him, and --

Marie Allen: How was he relating this to the gubernatorial [job]?

Robert Maddox: Well, it was 1970, so we were into the Civil Rights thing, the riots, the war in Vietnam. I remember, particularly, all across South Georgia, all of the segregation schools had cropped up. Parents who did not want their children going to school with blacks were creating all these private schools. And he was asked about that, and I remember him saying that while he did not approve of that, he nonetheless saw those schools as a safety valve, that if we did not have those, that there would probably be a whole lot more riots and upheaval and that he hoped that many of them would not last, that that would not be the pattern of education in Georgia.

And I particularly remember that I lit into him on that, and he talked about Martin Luther King and not too much about the war. I remember his own sequence. It was kind of before he was -- really had -- was firmly set against the war in Vietnam. The main thing was talking about the race problems. And Druid Hills was at that time and still is in a changing neighborhood, and so it was right at our front door how to deal with not only blacks but poor people, in general. And he had a lot of good insights for the kids about that. Very productive meeting.

Marie Allen: Niebuhr wrote *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, didn't he?

Robert Maddox: Right.

Marie Allen: And he talked about the problems with people in groups and the destructive influences that often came out of a group association.

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: Is this the kind of thing he was talking about in that connection? Do you remember?

Robert Maddox: I really don't remember specifically about that.

Marie Allen: That's fine.

Robert Maddox: Yeah, you know, I just remember him referring to Niebuhr and then kind of spinning off from some of the things that he was believing and thinking about Niebuhr.

Marie Allen: Well, your next contact then was when?

Robert Maddox: I don't -- I went to the governor's inauguration in 1970, stood out on the grounds --

Marie Allen: It's warmer for inaugurations in Georgia this year.

Robert Maddox: Yeah, a little bit, yeah. Of course, it was January. It was a beautiful

day. I remember the day, beautiful day. I remember the stand out in front of the Capitol and all.

I met Jeff [Carter]. Didn't really know Jeff, but I remember meeting Jeff, but I really had no more contact with him.

After I went to Calhoun, I invited him [Jimmy Carter] to come preach up there, but he -- by that time, he pretty well decided he was not taking Sunday engagements. He was teaching a class at Northside Drive Church in Atlanta, and he wrote back and said he just really preferred not to be gone and thanked me but declined to come and speak. I don't know that I saw the man in the flesh again, I guess, until the inauguration, to tell you the truth.

I don't remember seeing him from 1970 to 1977. I hadn't even thought about that. Maybe a time or two, but I don't really remember any other time. Of course, when he was -- we followed the whole thing, particularly through the primaries every Tuesday night to agonize over the primary, but -- and, of course, we knew all that was going on from Jack and Judy, though Jack was reluctant to talk a lot about politics, and Judy would always talk politics. We were having supper together, and we fed them a whole lot. I'd find out a whole lot more about the politics from Judy than I would from Jack.

Marie Allen: Is Jack not interested in politics, do you think?

Robert Maddox: Not as much, and Jack, along the way, decided that he was going to have his own life. And if you relate to Jack, you relate to Jack and not Jimmy Carter through Jack. And I pretty quickly picked that up because that was the kind of the unspoken rule of the game, that Jack and I did not talk about politics and -- but Judy just had more of an interest in it, and it was -- being an in-law, it was more of a novel idea to her than it was to Jack. So that was kind of the ground rules of the relationship.

Marie Allen: Do you think Jack will ever go into politics himself?

Robert Maddox: I would doubt it seriously. Jack entertained the idea of running for office. He was going to run this year, in '80, against Larry McDonald [Congressman from Georgia], but when he really began to count the cost, he decided it wasn't worth it. He didn't want to do it badly enough to spend the money and the time, be away from his family, and take the abuse that would've surely come. So he decided not to.

Jack is very bright, but I don't know that he's much of a politician. He -- like I said, he doesn't bear fools easily, you know, just doesn't tolerate people who have ideas that he doesn't agree with or doesn't tolerate very easily, so I think he'd have a hard time getting elected. Even though he probably would do a very good job, he would not be a very good campaigner.

Marie Allen: Would you say that he's generally unlike his father? Is he more -- you don't see many similarities?

Robert Maddox: Yeah, I do and I don't. As far as the mind and the penetrating thoughts, I suspect that Jack is more like his father than the other two boys. I have a lot

of confidence in Jack's thinking ability.

But when it comes to campaigning, then Chip is more like Jimmy than Jack, and Jeff doesn't -- from what I understand, does not like it at all. He just doesn't want any part of it. And their sense of humor is much alike. Both are masters at sarcasm when they want to play that, so they're a whole lot alike.

Marie Allen: That may come a little bit from Miss Lillian, too. We've interviewed Miss Lillian and --

Robert Maddox: Have you? A lot of times, Jack would come out with something and I really didn't know what he meant, and sometimes I would say, "I don't know what you meant by that." A lot of times, I would play his game and pretend that I knew what he meant and not and then later figure part of it out, which was kind of the way we did, but he's pretty sarcastic, and then the President can be real sarcastic.

Marie Allen: Were you -- soon after the Carter administration began, did you have any idea that you were going to be coming to Washington?

Robert Maddox: No, well, that was interesting. I have had some friends up here who were pretty close to the Nixon White House, and they had told me that Mr. Nixon had had somebody in the White House who kind of was the liaison with religious community, and so as soon as Carter was elected, I said, "That's what I'd like to do."

Marie Allen: Why does that particularly attract you?

Robert Maddox: Well, I have to tell you another story about that. I had always been interested in history and politics, and back in the early '60's, my wife introduced me to Alan Drury's novels, *Advise and Consent* and a whole series of novels. Took him about 10 years to write it all. And so I really became intrigued with inside Washington, so that was one little bit of it and just always thought I'd like to work in Washington in some kind of way.

So when Carter was elected, I immediately began to make a bid to do this job. I sat down without ever knowing what anyone else had ever done with it and wrote out a job description. And soon after the election, I had it refined pretty well. Talked to Jack and Judy about it. Tried to talk to Jody about it a little bit. Never could really settle Jody down long enough to talk about it. Got it to Plains, and from time to time, I was kind of getting my hopes up, but nothing ever came of it. And in fact, in -- probably by late summer of '77, got a letter from Midge Costanza saying, "Thank you for your resume. I will put it on file." So I laid it to rest.

In '78, though, I began to know that the President was in pretty bad trouble with a lot of religious people, so I revived it, revived --

Marie Allen: Now, what made you think this? What were the circumstances?

Robert Maddox: Well, I was reading the paper, for one thing, and I knew that there were a lot of troubles in the camp, but in early May of '78, Jody [Powell] called and said, "The President is going to speak to the Brotherhood Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in June in Atlanta, and nobody up here knows how to write that speech. Would you draft a speech for him?" Of course, it just flipped me out. Of course, I would.

And I wrote it, but as I began to write it, I called around to two or three Southern Baptist denominational leaders to get their ideas about it, both to get their ideas [and] to let them know that I was doing it, you know, kind of bragging about it and found deep animosity toward the President. Even from Southern Baptist leaders, with them saying that they had no access to the White House. Under Johnson or Nixon, they could get in and get things done, but they couldn't find anybody to work with in the Carter White House. So that frightened me for the President and also refueled my desire to come to work up here, and I decided if he was in trouble with Southern Baptist leaders, what would he be with others?

So I went the whole route again and in the early fall of '78 got a letter from the President, in effect, saying thank you but no thank you about coming to work up here. The letter said something like, "Appreciate your willingness to help. You do your thing, and I'll do mine." It was a cordial letter, but that was the essence of it. So I really did. I just laid it aside then.

Marie Allen: Had he used your speech?

Robert Maddox: Yeah, he used my speech. He did. My remarks became the basis of what he said to the convention. And in the meantime, I'd done a little bit of stuff from Mrs. Carter, too, even though I had not seen her since 1970.

Marie Allen: Now, Judy was very close to Mrs. Carter?

Robert Maddox: Yeah, Judy was very close, and in Easter of '77, the first really big event that they did was to come to Calhoun for Easter. That was the first real big splash that they did.

Marie Allen: I remember that.

Robert Maddox: That's a whole --

Marie Allen: There was a christening, wasn't there, of one of the grandchildren?

Robert Maddox: Well, no, that was in '79 just before I came up here. But the President and Amy and Mrs. Carter came in '77 to church on Easter. But I didn't have a conversation with him other than just to meet him and walk him through, you know. There was no time. But the letter came in '78, and I laid everything aside.

Then about Christmas of '78, the speechwriter department fell apart up here; Fallows left and other changes. So right after Christmas, early February, I'd guess, Judy called one day and said, "Rosalynn said get all your writings together," and through the years, I had done a good bit of writing for Southern Baptists. I had written a book. I had written four Sunday School quarterlies plus the speech that I had drafted for the President and -- so I did. I got real excited, and that was early February, I suppose. And everything just kind of dragged on, with me waiting momentarily to hear from him, until the middle of March.

And by then, it was apparent that we were going to have a Mideast treaty signing, and an idea for that speech came to me, and I'd been reading some material from a friend in which he used the phrase, *Peace like war is waged*. So I said, "Aha, I'll write a speech for that event, and I did. Over a period of four or five days, drafted a speech and sent it to Mary Hoyt. I'd gotten to know Mary somewhat.

Marie Allen: Did you pick out the verse about the five shares, too?

Robert Maddox: Yeah, did the whole thing. And sent it up here to Mary, and Jack looked at it and Edna Langford, Judy's mother, looked at it, and she liked it. But that was it. No word until about 30 minutes before the event was to take place. I was in a meeting in Florida and the White House called, "This is Jody," and said, "The President's going to use your remarks, but they need to know where you got that quote, *Peace like war is waged*," so I told them where I got it. I just flipped out, just what you would imagine.

Marie Allen: A very high experience?

Robert Maddox: Yeah. Got to a television set and, sure enough, he talked. He used much of it-- he didn't use everything I sent but nearly all that he used was what I sent; it was a very fulfilling thing.

And soon after that, within a week after that, Rafshoon called and said, "Won't you come up and talk with us?" So when I came up to talk with them, really I found out then that what they really wanted was religious liaison. It was funny. Rafshoon said, "Have you ever thought of doing this?" And I said, "Yes, I had thought of doing this."

Marie Allen: After sending several --

Robert Maddox: Yeah, resumes and job description and everything else up here. So that was Friday the 13th of 1979 when I came to see Rafshoon.

Marie Allen: Were you surprised that Mr. Rafshoon would have been the one to talk to you about religious liaison?

Robert Maddox: No, I don't think I even thought of that. I knew he was just the one to talk with.

So I started in May, started May the 15th of '79, but speechwriting was not satisfying to me--partly because so many people get in on a presidential speech and I had been spoiled with the two that I had done for him, which evidently just struck the chord, and --

Marie Allen: Well, did you come to do the religious liaison or the speechwriting duties?

Robert Maddox: Even though Rafshoon had said religion liaison, the first few weeks I was here, there was nothing said about that. I came in May and began to do speeches and all with the rest of them in the speech department, but immediately when I came, I was inundated by preachers and religious leaders from all over the country saying, "At long last, somebody that understands who we are," and was swamped with these people.

So early in June or somewhere along in there, I talked to Greg Schneiders, who was Rafshoon's deputy, and I said, "What is this, religious liaison, that y'all want me to do?" He said, "I don't know." I said, "Why don't I tell you what I think ought to be done with it, and so I did, and he said, "Fine." Rafshoon looked at it. "Fine."

Marie Allen: Did you pull out your old job description at that point?

Robert Maddox: That's what I did. I pulled it out and reworked it, told them what I wanted to do and what ought to be done, and they said, "Do it."

Marie Allen: Quickly, what was it? What was your idea?

Robert Maddox: I was -- I would be called religious liaison, and I would be the conduit between the President and the administration and the American religious community, to meet with them, to go to their meetings, have them here to explain their positions to the President and the President's positions to them and to just do whatever kinds of footwork needed to be done.

Marie Allen: And you think it primarily the Christian religious community?

Robert Maddox: Well, I had thought of Catholic, Christian, Jews, the whole thing. As a matter of fact, by the time I got here, he was in such deep trouble with the more conservative groups that I spent most of my time trying to put out the fires -- unsuccessfully most of the time -- put out the fires among the conservatives who were, by then, really deeply set against Jimmy Carter.

Marie Allen: Now, what do you -- first of all, did you have any contact with Jerry Falwell? Was this the group you were talking about at this point?

Robert Maddox: Well, I had some contact with Falwell, but it was the more conservative Southern Baptists to the independent Baptists to the Charismatics, the independent kinds of church groups.

Marie Allen: Separate from the Falwell organization?

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: And what were their primary concerns?

Robert Maddox: Well, the first thing that hit me was that there were no evangelicals in government. Everybody that the President had brought on was -- you know, they might have been religious, but they were not evangelical. They were not conservative, not -- "they couldn't speak the language of the Bible" folks, which was a surprise to me because I knew Jody, and I knew he and his wife were active in a church here in town and I knew Max Cleland was a lay speaker of a growing reputation. Pretty quickly found out that Cecil Andrus and Bergland and several others, Eizenstat in the Jewish faith and all, were really active people. But it didn't matter. People -- the perception was that everybody was godless; all the people that he had surrounded himself were godless.

Walked into the abortion thing, which was a surprise because I knew how strict Carter had been on abortions in Georgia, prayer in public schools, the whole litany of conservative concerns. They were already -- had their minds made up against him. They would -- because Reagan was hardly on the scene then, but they were really dead-set against Jimmy Carter.

Marie Allen: And these were people, do you think, that had supported him in '76?

Robert Maddox: Some of them. Looking back, some of them had. Some of them had supported him reluctantly, but looking back, I have an idea that they did not support him in '76.

On down the line, of course, when I bumped into Jerry Falwell, I knew that Falwell had not. He was openly supportive of Ford in '76. So pretty quickly, by the middle of the summer, I was spending most of my time either meeting with or traveling to religious groups.

Marie Allen: Did you see the election-year problems with the so-called Moral Majority coming?

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: Are you saying that you saw the concern was there. Did you see it as an organized force?

Robert Maddox: Yeah. I was beginning to see it. About early November of '79, I wrote a memo to Mrs. Carter that I copied to Jody and Hamilton -- oh, and I don't who all else-- in which I just detailed all of this stuff and said, "We've got a real problem." And then I said, "The big flag issue is abortion. They're going to get him on abortion."

Marie Allen: Now, the President -- correct me if I'm wrong -- the President has been

against the Constitutional amendment --

Robert Maddox: He's always been opposed to abortion, but he's opposed to the amendment, yeah.

Marie Allen: And so it was the opposition to the amendment --

Robert Maddox: Well, yeah, but when I first got into it, there was either real or feigned ignorance about the President's opposition to abortion, period. Everybody was saying, "He's for abortion." I said, "No, he's not." And they said, "Well, he appointed Anne Wexler and Sarah Weddington no matter what he--." When I would say, "He is opposed to abortion," then they would come back and say, "Well, his actions speak louder than his words because he's got Wexler and Weddington. And then when I would say, "It doesn't matter what they feel. The law was -- of the Supreme Court was in '73," and they said, "Yeah, but he's not for the amendment." So there was no dealing with them by then. They already had their minds made up. And so he was in real deep trouble even then with the conservative community. I know now that the conservative community also tends to be Republican. So it's very difficult for them to separate their Republican leanings from their religious leanings. So it was -- but it was pretty serious pretty quickly.

Marie Allen: There was a growing split in the religious community in this country over the Carter election, wasn't there?

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: Now, what -- who did you see lining up on the other side? You described the very conservative political Republicans --

Robert Maddox: The very conservative --

Marie Allen: -- religious denominations on one side --

Robert Maddox: And the mainline people, particularly mainline clergy, like Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterian, Episcopal, a lot of Catholic clergy, even though they don't like the abortion thing, it was that mainstream -- United Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ -- those kind of clergymen understood -- really understood the ambiguities of the President's positions. I think most Southern Baptists did. The academic community - - religious academic community were with the President.

But the man in the pew-- particularly the more conservative he was-- and the conservative clergy were really set against Jimmy Carter. And by then, it was getting nasty. By then, it was beginning to be just an out-and-out hatchet job. The TV preachers, the religious broadcasters, particularly the radio broadcasters, tend to be very conservative, and they were screaming about secular humanism. They were talking about abortions. They were all for [Senator Jesse] Helms, on prayer in public schools, and

Jimmy Carter was opposed to that. They had not settled on a candidate at that time. A lot of them were flirting with Crane.

Marie Allen: Do you think there's anything that President Carter could have done to win those folks over?

Robert Maddox: Probably not much at that late date. In my own comments on what went wrong, it should have been done -- overtures should have been made immediately after the election in '77 to begin to bring those kind of people into the White House to explain -- if nothing else, just to bring them in, let them come to parties here, but even more substantively, to begin to explain the President's positions.

But even when I came to the White House in May of '79, I don't believe anybody knew what bad trouble he was in on those issues -- abortion, ERA, prayer in public school -- because the White House staff was liberal theologically, if they had a theology, and surely politically, and in many ways tended to discount the numbers, and the intensity that was out there.

Marie Allen: You didn't get any response, you say, to your memo in '79 which outlines -
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Robert Maddox: Only Anne Wexler and I want to give her good marks. She realized pretty quickly what we had and began with all the other stuff she was doing to give me more and more freedom to do what I felt like I needed to do.

I need to back up and say after the Camp David meeting in July, a lot of changes came in the White House. Alonzo came -- Alonzo McDonald came, the speechwriters moved from one end of the hall to the other, and in the process of that, I was told that I would concentrate on religious liaison under -- in somebody else's shop, probably in Anne Wexler's shop. So pretty quickly, I began to deal with Anne, and by October the 1st, it was official that I would be with Anne. So Anne gave me great freedom to do whatever I needed -- felt like I needed to do to relate to them and to salvage really whatever could be salvaged.

And so in January of '80, we had our famous Jerry Falwell breakfast. Jerry Falwell and Oral Roberts, Rex Humbard, somebody from Billy Graham's organization, Jim Bakker, PTL down at Charlotte -- Pat Robertson was invited but couldn't come -- and about six other conservative religious leaders met with the President. James Kennedy from Fort Lauderdale, Florida and Tim LaHaye from California were among --

Marie Allen: Was this in the White House Mess?

Robert Maddox: No, it was in the family -- well, it was in the downstairs dining room in the residence, had breakfast and tried to talk then about the President's positions.

Marie Allen: Had you set this meeting up?

Robert Maddox: I set the meeting up. Anne and I set the meeting up and -- with some skepticism. We knew that three or four of them were enemies, pretty much enemies of the President. Falwell, Kennedy, LaHaye, Charles Stanley from Atlanta had already done a lot of talking against Jimmy Carter. By then, we were into the SALT II debates, and so they were pretty well set against him, but we thought we might could salvage them. I mean they indicated to me, you know, they had open minds and all that kind of -- and I learned from that that you don't really change an enemy, political enemy, particularly with just a breakfast.

Marie Allen: Describe what happened at breakfast.

Robert Maddox: It was a cordial breakfast. We started about eight o'clock. Anne ate and finished with us, and we ate and then had a kind of a roundtable discussion with Anne on some issues until about a quarter of nine.

And then the President came in, and in order to expedite matters, the men had agreed to the questions, and I had said, "What do you want to talk about?" And they said, "Here are the things we want to talk about," and so I had even gone so far as to say, "Well, then why don't you ask this question?" And I had prepared and I'd done all the briefings for the President so that he could answer.

Marie Allen: Were the areas the ones you'd mentioned before -- abortion --

Robert Maddox: Yeah, abortion, ERA, prayer in public schools, defense, no evangelicals in government, that kind of stuff.

And so they agreed, and everybody knew what the ground rules were, that the questions were prepared. And I said, "Of course, if you want to veer from it, you can. Of course, you're at liberty to do that, but if -- we want to deal with the issue that you want to deal with." So we did. We went around the room.

Seven -- I think there were seven questions -- seven out of the 12 or 14 asked the questions, and the President responded, very cordial, no bad feelings or anything like that. But we went out of the meeting, and then three or four of them immediately began to distort the meeting -- Falwell, Charles Stanley, Tim LaHaye, and James Kennedy.

Marie Allen: When did you realize they were distorting?

Robert Maddox: Within 30 minutes.

Marie Allen: How -- how did you realize that?

Robert Maddox: Well, some reporters were waiting outside, and I heard the kinds of questions and answers taking place there. It was also the annual meeting of the National Religious Broadcasters, and there was a lot of press covering these people. By then,

Falwell was becoming a celebrity, and so he had a press conference. And they were -- what they were doing, they were just kind of shading the meeting, distorting it, not lying about it, but distorting it.

And, of course, later on then in March, up in Alaska is when Falwell fabricated the conversation with the President about homosexuals. There was -- the question about homosexuality really did not come up except obliquely in the meeting. And then later in Alaska, Falwell told a group that he -- he said, "When I met with the President for breakfast, I said, "Why do you have known practicing homosexuals on your staff?"" And the President is supposed to have said, "Well, I'm President of all the people." And Falwell said, "And then I said, Mr. President, why don't you have murderers and burglars on your staff?" And, of course, the conversation never occurred, and then we found out about it, and then we put the word out that Mr. Falwell had lied about the meeting.

Marie Allen: Was there any question whatsoever at the meeting on the subject of homosexual --

Robert Maddox: At one point, Falwell said -- talking about the family, he said, "Mr. President, do I understand that your definition of the family precludes homosexual families?" which was kind of a convoluted question. And the President nodded, "Yes, I agree that my definition of a family does not include homosexual families." And Falwell said, "Thank you. Thank you very much."

And the reason I know that is because Falwell made a transcript of the meeting. He said, "May I tape the meeting?" And I said -- it was supposed to be off the record, but I said yes. So he later sent me his own transcript of the meeting, and so by his own words, you know, we had what happened at the meeting --

Marie Allen: Was the transcript accurate as far as you could tell? Was it an accurate --?

Robert Maddox: Yeah, his transcript was accurate, yeah.

Marie Allen: Well, I hope there's a copy of that in the files.

Robert Maddox: Yeah, there is.

Marie Allen: Good. We'd like to have that.

Robert Maddox: And --

Marie Allen: Why do you think Falwell was distorting the --

Robert Maddox: Well, he -- he was on his celebrity jag by then, and by then, the Moral Majority had been organized, which was a conscious move by the political right to link up with the religious right, and --

Marie Allen: Excuse me just a minute. I'm going to change this tape.

Robert Maddox: He was becoming the best-known conservative TV preacher in the country, and he just got carried away with himself. And by then, Reagan was emerging as the frontrunner, and Falwell and his folks had had, like I said, flirted with Crane. I really think Crane or Helms would be the one that they wanted. But then as Reagan became the frontrunner, they just gravitated more and more to Ronald Reagan. And by then, it was, "Get Jimmy Carter."

Marie Allen: What was the organizational linkage between the Reagan campaign and the Falwell organization? Do you know?

Robert Maddox: Do it again now?

Marie Allen: What was the organ -- was there any organizational tie-up between the Falwell organization and the Reagan campaign?

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: Do you know were the lines close?

Robert Maddox: They were unofficially close, but Bob Billings, Dr. Robert Billings, was the first executive director of the Moral Majority, which was Falwell's -- Falwell and Paul Wyrick, a conservative rightwing guy, that was their organization. Billings was the first executive director of that.

And then when the Reagan campaign got really cranked up, Billings left Moral Majority and became the religion advisor kind of guy for the Reagan campaign. So there was that direct tie between there.

It was funny. All the way through, Falwell kept saying, "We're not endorsing candidates," but there was no doubt about who they were for.

And by then, by early summer anyway of '80, all kinds of anti-Jimmy Carter/pro-Reagan pieces of literature were being cranked out and mailed all over the country, supposedly bipartisan but always painting Reagan as the paragon of Christian virtue and Jimmy Carter as kind of the antichrist--Carter and Anderson really as the antichrists. Very slanted literature--and, I think, very irresponsible--was mailed extensively.

Marie Allen: Now, it must have been frustrating for you as the advisor to the religious communities to see all of this being cranked up?

Robert Maddox: Yeah, it was terribly frustrating, and we had no effective way to combat it. Conservatives had taken over religious radio, and they had taken over religious television. They just -- they cornered the market -- temporarily, at least, cornered the market on all of that, plus the fact that we didn't have any money. The

campaign could not do it really, could not put out religious stuff about Jimmy Carter, and we did not have these other highly motivated religious groups to do it, and it cost a whole lot of money to do that.

Finally, a group of laymen, Baptist laymen -- well, just general ecumenical laymen put together over \$50,000 and put out a piece that was finally mailed and received, oh, probably not more than a week from the election in which they said, "Let the President speak for himself." So a good, strong piece for Jimmy Carter. It was the only religious piece.

Marie Allen: Mailed to --

Robert Maddox: Mailed to -- they used a big mailing list and had a professional group do it. It was mailed to about 250,000 ministers in the country, but that was the only piece that I know of that went out in favor of the President.

Marie Allen: Were you involved with that piece and --

Robert Maddox: No, I was initially. Then I found out it was illegal for me to be involved in it, and so I backed off. I just told the people that were doing it, I said, "I really can't do anything else with you about this. I can't even know what you're doing."

Marie Allen: Because it was related to the campaign? That was the problem?

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: I noticed that there were a number of television ads taken against the Moral Majority by ministers and by religious groups in the last month, too, before the campaign.

Robert Maddox: Yeah, Norman Lear's Committee for the American Way or something like that did that, trying to give some balance to what was being done. Not so much -- not having to do with that either -- I knew they were doing it, but I told them immediately that, again, I couldn't have anything to do with it legally. And so I didn't even try to monitor that at all. I was busy. I campaigned heavily myself particularly through the South, but didn't have anything to do with those things.

Marie Allen: Now, describe to me your campaigning activities, and why is it that you could campaign but you couldn't assist another group with campaigning?

Robert Maddox: The reason I could not assist the other would be if I became involved, then it got mixed up in campaign funding, and, technically, if I became involved, the Carter/Mondale campaign would have to pay the bill for that.

Marie Allen: Okay.

Robert Maddox: And so I could have nothing to do with it, but I could campaign because I could take my own time, you know. I could take annual leave time and campaign, and either the Carter/Mondale national campaign or state campaigns would pay for me to come and meet with ministers and do all kinds of interviews and stuff like that, trying to deal with it.

Marie Allen: Did you travel then extensively?

Robert Maddox: Traveled extensively.

Marie Allen: Where, primarily? What regions?

Robert Maddox: Well, I did North and South Carolina. Didn't do much in Georgia. I did Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, one quick run to California, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, New Jersey. We've been in Maryland, Tennessee, kind of loop through there.

Marie Allen: Did you meet with conservatives or with mainlines?

Robert Maddox: Both. Started out -- I learned some things in that I would just get somebody that I knew in those areas to set up a meeting, and the first time or two, they just put an ad in the paper that Bob Maddox from the White House was coming. What that did was bring out all of the anti-Carter people. And so, of course, the press would come, and we'd get bad press.

So pretty quickly, I said, "Let's don't do any more of those. Let's meet with our friends and get them -- try to get them motivated to do something for the President." So we pretty quickly began to meet with friends and tried to motivate them and let them get some stuff going on. But I met -- I ran into some mighty rough people who --

Marie Allen: Ministers?

Robert Maddox: Ministers and laypeople—it's the same old sixes and sevens. By then, I knew all the questions and the answers, but it was abortion and ERA and prayer in public schools and SALT II and no evangelicals in government. I just -- just time and time and time again, you know.

But I did see some changes though. When I first started traveling, everywhere I went, the people would say, "He's not even a Christian." So I did enough national TV, particularly national religious television, that by the time the campaign was over, people had pretty well quit saying, "He's not a Christian." They would suggest that he was not much of a Christian; if he believed all these things, he couldn't be much of a Christian. But the opinions were set by -- it was an uphill battle, and I tried. I really tried, having a lot of good help through all the states that I traveled. Of course, I made a world of new friends myself, and I did some good for the President, but obviously, not enough good. But --

Marie Allen: Do you think you're going to write something about the experiences?

Robert Maddox: Yeah, I'm already working on it myself. Kind of religion and the Carter White House is what I want to do and --

Marie Allen: Will it be a book-size endeavor?

Robert Maddox: Yeah, I think so. It's looking that way. I've just done the outline, and I want to lay it all out, describe what happened, do kind of a diagnosis on it, but then hope to speak to more the midstream and talk about some of the dangers that I see in this whole movement, and they're very real dangers. And --

Marie Allen: But, quickly, what do you see --

Robert Maddox: Well, I see morality by decree. I ran across one phrase, "Virtue with a vengeance." And Jerry Falwell and his people, particularly the meaner Christians, would really set aside civil liberties if they thought that that would ensure the kind of morality that they want. They would impose it on themselves and on the society as a whole.

And the President got in trouble when he suggested in the campaign that racism was there, but it is. It's just right beneath the surface. The same kind of mentality that cranked out the anti-nigger stuff in the '50s cranked out this hate stuff against Jimmy Carter in the '80s. It's always been there. It never has gone away, but it kind of submerged a little bit, disappeared, went underground a little bit for 20 years or so. But Jimmy Carter brought it all out again, and you know, anti-Carter stuff. So it's very much of a threat there, and right now, those kind of people, many of them have the major religious televisions and nearly all of the radio.

Marie Allen: And civil liberties and --

Robert Maddox: Yeah, the irony of the whole thing is the Republican mindset, of which these people are a part, says, "Get the government off our backs," except when they want government involved in abortion and homosexuality --

Marie Allen: Prayer in the schools.

Robert Maddox: -- and prayer in schools. They are generally very unreflective about national events and ignore many of the teachings of Jesus and of the Bible, in general, about how you resolve conflicts. You know, they have this -- they're much a macho image of if you're not hitting somebody, you're not really doing a good job.

And they never could understand Jimmy Carter, just never could understand Jimmy Carter. And I lay part of the blame at his feet, or at all of our feet, for not interpreting better what he does believe. But it needed to be done immediately after he got here, and I think really by the time I got here, the image, particularly in the conservative community, was set.

Marie Allen: Don't you -- I get the feeling that the President -- that the image perhaps the president's staff had-- was that the religious community belonged to Jimmy Carter already --

Robert Maddox: --And so don't worry about it.

Marie Allen: -- because he was the -- one of the most openly professed Christians --

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: -- that we've had in office.

Robert Maddox: One of the points that I am making in my book is, and that just confirms it, is that the staff depended on the President's own personal religious practices to keep that whole community, and they never did understand what being born again means, how that translates to more conservative people.

I know exactly how he feels because, number one, I'm from Georgia and I'm a Southern Baptist, and I pastored in South Georgia. And being born again in South Georgia means a personal experience with the Lord, but it's also a very forgiving attitude, you know, the town drunk, the county commissioner that has a mistress, you know, you just kind of -- you don't like it, but you just kind of accept that kind of thing.

But to born-again in the independent group and to born-again in Ohio and Illinois and California, born again translates not only into a personal relationship but in a very definite moral code. And these days, it's abortion and ERA and anti-gay and stuff like that.

Marie Allen: I get the feeling that the numbers of people involved in this movement are actually small when compared to most religious denominations.

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: Is that true?

Robert Maddox: I think so. They talk about 60 million people who profess a born-again faith but not anywhere near that number are the more rigid born-againers. It's probably more like 10, 12, 15 million. And I pick up that figure because some pretty good studies have been done about the people who watch religious television -- CBN, PTL -- and about 10 to 12 million people watch all those programs. And if somebody sends money to Falwell, they probably also send it to Rex Humbard or maybe to Jim Bakker or to Pat Robertson.

My mother, lifelong Southern Baptist, for years has sent money to Jerry Falwell and Rex Humbard. Those were just two of her favorite people. Of course, when Falwell and I

had our ruckus, she immediately cut off her funds to Falwell, but she still sends money to Rex Humbard.

Marie Allen: That's a very touchy priority problem there.

Robert Maddox: Oh, yeah, sure. So the numbers are not great, but they're very vocal, and there's a lot of money there.

Marie Allen: And that's the interesting thing, interesting to hear you say that, because the numbers are not the overwhelming numbers of Christians in denominations in this country, but it's money.

Robert Maddox: Money.

Marie Allen: And the vocal, the very -- the public. Why is this? Is it the access, the control to radio and television, that has brought the money in?

Robert Maddox: A lot of things have brought the money in. To the people who watch those programs, Jerry Falwell and Jim Bakker and Pat Robertson and all the people kind of become a part of the family. They're folksy, and we're all worried about the moral climate of the country, you know, all of us are, so I won't ever gloss over that. And they speak a very immediate kind of warm, uncomplicated message.

And there's also a hooker that we're just now beginning to be aware of, and they seem to say, and in fact do say, "If you will send -- if you will support this ministry, God's going to bless you." And so little old ladies send in \$10 and then rush to the mailbox looking for \$100 or some other kind of blessing, you know, maybe not money blessing, but "If you'll send money, God's going to bless you." And so money's coming in.

And Falwell, in particular, has mastered a technique of negative issues as a means to fundraising. He's always got to have a fight of some kind --

Marie Allen: A devil of some kind.

Robert Maddox: Yeah, you join in the fight and send money. So it doesn't take too many millions of people sending \$5 or \$10 a week to make up a lot of money.

Marie Allen: Why is it that the mainline denominations are not more into the radio and television?

Robert Maddox: Because the only way you can raise -- the only demonstrated way to raise money on television is through a very simplistic theology. Healing of the devils, or the old sawdust revival kind of evangelism--and mainline folks, the ministers and all, that's just not their kind of theology. They cannot, in their view, at least, prostitute their theology, cheapen the gospel enough to raise money in those kinds of ways. So it's a difference in -- it's the whole mindset.

Marie Allen: Well, now, there are some programs. I thinking for one about Baumann and Bible here in town, you know, which is very different from the simplistic. It's a very in-depth kind of program. Do you think there's a role that the mainline denominations are not playing as far as supporting and funding and --

Robert Maddox: They're moving into that, see? I don't know how Dr. Bauman's money comes in --

Marie Allen: Totally voluntary contributions.

Robert Maddox: -- but our own radio and television commission, Southern Baptist Radio and TV Commission, is just now beginning to move into this. They've got grand plans, and I think they'll realize them.

Marie Allen: Now, what radio and television commission, the Southern --

Robert Maddox: Southern Baptist.

Marie Allen: The National Southern --

Robert Maddox: Southern Baptist, yeah. We've had a radio and TV commission for about 30 years, but a lot of internal stuff had gone on, and we'd kind of lost out to these people. So we have a new president now of that group, and he is really trying to get us into religious television, broadcasting, programming. And others are, too, but the problem is money. It costs so much money to do those things.

But I had been to two or three of the stations. I've been to PTL and CBN and have become good friends with them. I like them. But they've got elaborate layouts, but they all live on the brink of financial disaster. If they don't -- if we had a weeklong mail strike, they'd all go down the tube.

Falwell raises over \$50 million a year, and *Newsweek* and *Time* and all of them report fairly unanimously that he's just in bad trouble financially all the time. They live real high. I don't think that the people are using the money -- they're not absconding with funds, but they're all living mighty high, and they have very elaborate television sets and productions and all. But they have that kind of basic old D.L. Moody, Billy Sunday, even Billy Graham basic appeal, you know, "Love Jesus and send money," and people want those kind of simple answers.

Marie Allen: What have you learned as a result of this experience as religious advisor? Has it given you any new insights?

Robert Maddox: Yeah, I don't know whether I can articulate them all or not.

One is a feeling for the country, for the strength of the country. I've been upset with a lot

of religious people, but I've also been impressed with the energy and vitality over the American religious community. If we would ever get ourselves together, we could go a long way toward tackling a lot of the problems of this country -- poverty and hunger and prejudice and those kinds of things. If we could have the same energy towards them that we do some of the other things, we could do a whole lot.

I've thoroughly enjoyed my contact with the Carters and been in a fairly unique relationship with him. My place on the stack pole or the staff is pretty far down the line, and yet, I'm in regular contact with Mrs. Carter. Been to Camp David a couple of times. Had dinner with them the other night, and so I've really enjoyed that aspect of it.

Have discovered some personal gifts of communication and confirmed some writing stuff, writing skills that I think I've got. I've also learned how quickly one can get in trouble, and once an image is set, it's set.

Marie Allen: You mean how quickly a political figure can --

Robert Maddox: Yeah, how quickly I can get in trouble, you know. One misstatement or one misquote and forever cast in a certain kind of light.

Marie Allen: Do you sense that the President is somewhat confused about the problem he has with the religious community, some of the religious community?

Robert Maddox: I think it's just now beginning to dawn on him. I know that that aspect of the campaign hurt him as much as anything else. "He came to his own, and his own received him not." I don't think yet he has really understood what happened to him there, and I haven't had that much time with him to tell him what all I think went wrong. Mrs. Carter is really upset. She's just really irritated and -- not bitter, but really, as we say in Georgia, hacked at the whole thing.

Marie Allen: Is she hacked at any particular forces, or do you think --

Robert Maddox: Well, she puts them all in the Moral Majority crowd, but the White House made some mistakes, you know, that could have been avoided --

Marie Allen: In dealing with this religious community?

Robert Maddox: -- in dealing with this, but it needed to be done immediately. I really think it needed to be done quickly --

Marie Allen: That was the key.

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: And it would have --

Robert Maddox: And they were not -- I don't want to suggest either that the conservative religious community cost Carter the election. I don't think that that was a major factor. I think the forces beyond here, Iran, the economy, the oil, those kind of things, those externals are what triggered the defeat. But he did not have that conservative community, and if we'd have worked at it harder earlier, we could've had--if not all of them--more of them that we did.

Marie Allen: And I hear you saying, too, that it would have taken a lot of money --

Robert Maddox: No, no --

Marie Allen: -- to reach out, to you.

Robert Maddox: It would in the campaign. By the time the campaign came off, it would take a whole lot of money to reach out. But a few symbolic things early in the game could've changed a lot of stuff. But three years running, the National Religious Broadcasters tried to get the President to come speak to them right here in Washington. Tried and tried and tried, and the staff never would do it until I came, and then he spoke to them in '80. Made a big hit, but it was a momentary hit. If he did exactly like -- if he'd have done that same speech in 1977 or even '78 and followed through on it in some ways, if he'd have done a little bit of religious television, you know, if if if.

Marie Allen: There had been a number of incidents in the paper of reported drug use by White House staffers. You mentioned that people would complain there were no evangelicals in government.

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: Did you --

Robert Maddox: Well, they all --

Marie Allen: -- hear the comment of the people who were there were using drugs?

Robert Maddox: Consistently. "Yeah, they're all rat finks," you know, and I said, "No, they're not." Hamilton Jordan set the image of the staff. Hamilton and, for some, Midge Costanza set the image of the staff, and it was very unfortunate.

Marie Allen: These were the people they were visualizing?

Robert Maddox: --that everybody up here was like Hamilton, and that could've been alleviated if he had earlier in the game appointed [Harold Hughes] or somebody like that to some kind of high post.

And just before the election, he was interviewed -- and before '76 elections, he was interviewed by Pat Robertson on Christian Broadcast Network in Virginia Beach. And in

the course of the interview, Pat said, "Do you plan to appoint some evangelicals to office?" And Pat said the President said, "Yeah." And Pat said, "May I give you some suggestions?" And Carter said, "Yeah."

So soon after the election, Pat Robertson and two or three others had marathon long-distance conference calls and put together the list, a list of about 20 well-known evangelicals, and chartered a plane and sent the list to Plains and delivered it to the President's door. I don't know whether they gave it to the President or somebody at the door, but the list got that far, and that was the last that was ever heard of it.

And so that burned them up, you know, and I've got the list. I finally -- when I heard about it, I called Pat and said, "Would you send me a copy of the list?" And some great people on the list who are not only Christians but are well qualified to hold whatever kind of post that they would've been appointed to. But it looked like they were being ignored and that Carter had used them to get elected and then had ignored them.

Marie Allen: That's fascinating. You've had an insight into the political process since you've been there.

Robert Maddox: Yeah, this is another aspect of my own personal growth is to see how complicated it is, how difficult it is for me to get anything done when I've just got a half a dozen people to work with, and they're not even fighting me. You know, it's just a matter of getting it done.

Then you translate that to the national and international scale, and you've got people who are fighting it, and it is a wonder that we ever get anything done. People don't understand that, and I don't think you can till you've been here.

Marie Allen: You're going to be describing some of this in your book coming out.

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: What are your other plans? Do you think you'll be involved in another church or --

Robert Maddox: Well, it looks like for now if I take the firm -- the most firm and interesting offer I've got so far, it's to go down to Greenville, North Carolina -- never heard of Greenville till a few months ago -- and I'll be assistant to the president at a junior college, a community junior college, and also be a guest lecturer at East Carolina University, which is also in the same town, and do my book, and I want to develop some what I think would be one-day seminars that I would do on some college campuses.

Marie Allen: I graduated from Duke. It's in North Carolina.

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: There's a warm spot in my heart for North Carolina. You've got some great schools in that state to do some --

Robert Maddox: Yeah, all kind of denominational schools, and I've got -- through my work here, I've made some good friends with some of those people, and I think that they will help me do it.

And all along, for a long time, I have felt like that I would like to be a college president. I'd like to be president of a Baptist school, or a Christian school for certain and maybe a Baptist school. And so when this thing came along, I said, well, this may be it to give me the kind of experience that I need to prepare me for something like that. And so that seemed to be the way that we've been led, and the people there have been real cordial and eager to have us come.

Talked to some churches, but churches are skeptical. You know, they don't -- not real sure about politics. Southern Baptist churches are conservative, and they're not -- they just aren't sure about me right now, and --

Marie Allen: Because of their concerns with Carter --

Robert Maddox: Well, Carter and politics, and it's just -- there's enough of a Republican mix in all of the Baptist churches. You know, here I am, straight out of the Democratic Carter White House, so I really haven't had too many conversations with churches that I'd be interested in, and a lot of them probably I think I would be interested in. It would take the right kind of church, a university kind of church, I think, for me to really be comfortable. So I'm really kind of intrigued with the North Carolina thing.

Marie Allen: There's a strong academic community all through North Carolina, too.

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: If we wanted to come back maybe five years from now and find you to do a longer series of interviews --

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: -- for the Carter library, where would -- what kind of address could we use to find you, find you at that time?

Robert Maddox: I will keep up with Jimmy Carter, and so between him and Mrs. Carter or Jody or Susan Clough or Phil Wise --

Marie Allen: Okay. Do you have an organization you would always -- an alumni association you would also be updated with?

Robert Maddox: Yeah, Baylor University out in Waco, Texas.

Marie Allen: And you keep up on their alumni list?

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: Okay. Thank you. Do you have any other comments you'd like to make?

Robert Maddox: No, I don't think so. I -- it's been a great experience, you know. When -- I've said this all along -- win, lose, or draw, it has completely changed our lives, changed our perspective, and now my biggest concern, I think, now is how do I conserve for me and for whatever kind of future ministry I might have, conserve what I've experienced in the people I've met and experiences-- what does it all mean now. And I don't know yet. I don't have any idea what it means.

Marie Allen: Seems to me a complex subject if you're trying to do the will of Jesus Christ and you're saying that the supporters of Jesus Christ are themselves deadlocked --

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: Where is the will to be found and how can you use the political process to accomplish His ends?

Robert Maddox: Right. And I think we're fighting the wrong battles, by and large, or at least we're fighting the right battles for the wrong reasons.

Marie Allen: In what sense?

Robert Maddox: Well, like on abortion. There's so much anger on that whole thing. I don't find anybody -- I don't find very many of any of the people who are deeply opposed to abortion worrying about that little teenage girl.

People who are worried about gay rights are nearly totally ignoring the pain of people who for whatever reasons have bought into that kind of lifestyle.

And they're not at all worried about the problems of the poor and hungry in the cities, and they're not -- they've picked up a little bit of Isaiah and Jeremiah and a little bit of Paul and have missed the mind of Jesus completely.

One of the things that I have done when I've spoken to some of these groups is to pick up Luke 4, when Jesus describes his ministry and say, "Here it is. Here's what it means to be anointed by the spirit, and here's how Jesus translates it, and his ministry authenticates this portion here in Luke."

So I think we're just fighting the wrong -- and those are much easier battles to fight. [They think] if you could pass a law about abortion, it'd go away. If you can make sure that the gays can't teach in public schools, then, you know, in some way, you'd solve the

problem. But all that is too permissive!.

And the mainlines, they've not been a whole lot better, but I think they're somewhat more sensitive to the depth of the pain that's involved, the human pain that is involved. It has distressed me to find the deep anger among many religious people, and some of the material that was pumped out against the Carters is just black, just angry, satanic stuff.

Marie Allen: Not the type of thing that we'd expect to be associated with Jesus Christ.

Robert Maddox: No. We all said all along was it's fine to quarrel with Jimmy Carter and it's fine to quarrel with him on these issues, but at least be honest about it, and so much of it was not. I think of a lot of people in the pew who have contributed that ever -- it never really never dawned on them what they had done, that they would be embarrassed.

Marie Allen: There's a lot of talk about the role of nostalgia in all of this, people looking back to a simpler age --

Robert Maddox: Yeah.

Marie Allen: -- running away from the complexities of the world in which they found themselves.

Robert Maddox: It's very sad, and whatever the conservative swing is, that's implicit in it. And I loved James Michener's piece in *The Post* yesterday, when he says, "I am a liberal." And he talks about taxes. And he said, "I pay far more taxes than probably most of you who are reading this article, but" he said, "I'm glad to." He didn't say, "I'm glad to," but he said, "That's the price of success." And he talked about a responsibility not only to the poor as the poor, but to maintain order in society, we've got to take care of some of those poor people. It's a very great article that a lot of people ought to read that, what it means to be liberal, the responsible kind of liberal.

But, again, the irony of it is that Jimmy Carter is a very conservative person -- theologically, fiscally. Personally, he's stingy, you know. But they never -- somehow or another, the administration could not translate that or so many were already set against him. I think there was also a mentality of those who didn't vote for him in the first place, but he's in, [so they say] "Now, we'll just see how born-again he really is, and we're waiting for him to stub his toe", and for a lot of them, he could not have done anything right anyway.

Marie Allen: There are so many paradoxes on this whole issue. Another one that strikes me is that a good many of these very conservative religious groups, Moral Majority groups, seem to be very aggressive militarily.

Robert Maddox: Oh, yeah.

Marie Allen: Now, how is a Christian -- you know, the Christian doctrine certainly is not an aggressive military doctrine. How is this --

Robert Maddox: No, see, America is the land, the new Israel. Or, you know, they don't quite say it like that, but that's the implication. This is -- "God has richly endowed us. We are the last great hope of the Gospel. And if we go down the tube, the Gospel goes down the tubes"-- which is a very shortsighted historical perspective. And so we've got to be strong. We've got to maintain our imperial position because the Gospel is dependent on us, and that's what they said. And what -- really, what they're doing is it is self-interest, but they cloak it in that religious --

Marie Allen: The protection of the lifestyle of these persons.

Robert Maddox: Sure, yeah. Under -- if the economy is bad, it hurts Jerry Falwell's television revenues. So there's very much a greed mentality underneath it all, but they said that America is the last great hope of the gospel.

Bill Bright of Campus Crusade is into this. He's raised hundreds of millions of dollars for evangelism, and when the economy's bad or when Russia threatens us, then the money that Bright needs to push the Gospel around the world is imperiled, so we've got to be strong militarily. That's the way they translate it, the way they see it.

Marie Allen: Another version of the Holy Roman Empire?

Robert Maddox: Yeah, that's what it is.

Marie Allen: Thank you. It's been so enjoyable, and I hope you'll come visit the Carter Presidential Library, and we can add your book to our shelves, also.

[End of audio]