

EDITORIAL: Unlike Elvis, O'Hair & Bigfoot, RM 2493 just lives on and on_102003

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Do you suppose Elvis and Madalyn Murray O'Hair are married and raising Bigfoot in a castle beside a lake in Scotland, where they go swimming with the Loch Ness Monster every afternoon?

This is just as likely to happen as Federal Communications Commission Petition No. 2493 is to become law and "stop the reading of the gospel of our Lord and Savior on the airwaves of America."

The petition, often called RM 2493 in e-mails, faxes and photocopied missives, died Aug. 1, 1975, a couple of years before Elvis expired and 20 years before O'Hair suddenly discovered she was wrong about atheism.

Unfortunately, the rumor of RM 2493's impending threat won't die.

The latest version circles the globe faster than either Santa or the Easter Bunny, zapping through e-mails at warp speed and growing faster than The Blob.

This version usually begins with a header that says something like "Help

Dr. Dobson” or “Dr. James Dobson pleads for action.” It goes on to warn that “an organization” has been granted a “federal hearing” before the FCC to support Petition 2493. “They got 287,000 signatures to back their stand!” the message pants. “If this attempt is successful, all Sunday worship services being broadcast on the radio or by television will be stopped. This group is also campaigning to remove all Christmas programs and Christmas carols from public schools! You as a Christian can help!”

It asks recipients to “sign” a petition at the bottom of the e-mail and then forward it “to everyone you think should read this.”

A previous version warned CBS television would discontinue broadcasting the “Touched By an Angel” show “for using the word 'God' in every program.”

Both rumors are hoaxes.

O'Hair never filed Petition 2493. In 1974, Jeremy Lansman and Lorenzo Milam asked the FCC to withhold licenses from religious TV and radio stations until it completed a study of their operating practices. The FCC denied their petition in the summer of 1975—more than 28 years ago.

But rumor of RM 2493 lives on—worrying Christians of goodwill, goading them to sign a meaningless protest—wasting time, energy and Christian credibility.

So, clip this editorial. Or copy the online version and save it in your computer. And when people pass on the rumor, set them straight.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.