

## When the Choir Was Late

An amazing story of God's care and protection for His own occurred in Beatrice, Neb., which is 40 miles south of Lincoln on the Big Blue River. The incident has been recounted by the late Paul Harvey and aired on television in episodes of *That's Incredible!* and *Unsolved Mysteries*.

Normally, all the members of the choir at West Side Baptist Church came together on Wednesday night to practice, starting at 7:20, and they tended to be early. But one Wednesday night, March 1, 1950, one by one, two by two, they all had excuses for being late:

- The pastor and his wife and daughter were late, as the daughter's dress was soiled and the wife was ironing another.
- One choir member, a high-school sophomore, was late due to problems with her geometry homework.
- Two members, sisters, were late as their car would not start, and their alternative ride was the girl with the geometry problem.
- Another member and her daughter were late as she had to attend to matters at her mother's house before arriving.
- Another member was working on an important letter.
- One member waited until the last possible minute before leaving, due to the cold weather.
- Another member, taking care of his two sons, was delayed and did not realize until the last minute he was late.
- The pianist had planned to arrive 30 minutes early, but fell asleep after dinner, which caused her and her mother (the choir director) to be late.
- Two other members, high-school students, were late as one wanted to catch the end of a radio program, and the other waited for her as they customarily went together to practice.

So all 15 members of the choir were late. At 7:20, not one soul was in the choir loft ready to start practice – the first time in the history of West Side Baptist Church that this had happened.

At 7:25 p.m., the church building exploded.

The cause? A gas leak in the basement was ignited by the furnace, and the whole church building blew up. The furnace room was right below the choir loft.

A series of coincidences? I think not.

– Beecher Hunter