

LUMBER RIVER CONFERENCE

By
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A member of
Hopewell Church

SOME REAL PURPOSES OF CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

(Second in a series of articles about The Lumber River Conference of the Holiness Methodist Church).

Last time we gave you the new appointments of the ministry staff assignments made at the 82nd Annual Conference. To complete the report the following staff members were also re-elected: Brothers: C.N. Lowry who has faithfully served the conference as secretary for 26 years. Mr. Lowry also is a retired North Carolina public school teacher with about 40 years of service and is very active in church work over the years. Donald W. Bullard as conference treasurer is the son of the late Belton Bullard who served many years as pastor in the conference, 6 years as Bishop. Mr. Bullard (his son) is an attorney-at-law with his practice in Robeson. Andrew Ransom, a long time professor of science at PSU as Sunday School Supervisor. Mr. Ransom has served in the position for several years. He is a graduate of PSU with a graduate degree (Masters) from Ohio State University. Mr. Ransom is very capable of carrying out his duties to promote such activities relative to: Sunday School Superintendent Conferences, Sunday School workers Conferences, and Sunday School work shop activities.

Clyde Colbert, Lay Leader of Young People joined the Conference a few years ago as a young fine christian gentleman. He serves the conference in many ways, however, his primary duties are to cultivate and promote Christian stewardships relative to vacation Bible School, Youth for Christ organization, camping, foster mutual understanding and Christian Brotherhood in the church Community, workshop activities and make recommendations for improving the general Church programs.

There were of course several conference committees appointed-we will share these with you later as they will be listed in our new official Journal for 1982-83.

SOME REAL PURPOSES OF CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

More and more we notice many new church buildings constructed in Robeson County. These buildings are constructed beautifully, causes one to want to learn something about the people, the

type organization, their church programs, their primary motives for building and their general procedures in conducting their church affairs. Shall we take a look at what is organization? To organize is to set up an administrative structure to arrange by systematic planning with a united effort. A church organization or a union for that matter, will strive for a large membership to make them a strong workable group of people. Whenever a group of people assemble themselves and draw up a sort of constitutional by-laws for the group, by the group shown coherent unity working together with the administrative staff that enforces the by-laws shows characteristics of being organized.

All kinds of people with different minds and physical make-up might not completely understand all the details of a functional organization. However, let us look at how Jesus taught in simple terms. Robeson farming is decreasing, as well as over the nation, most Robesonians are familiar with living close to the soil and general farm terms. Economically speaking up to about W.W.II cotton corn and tobacco were the chief crops grown in the southland as well as in Robeson County. These crops were attended by people with mules and plows. By hooking a mule to a plow, a common term was used to say be sure to get the mule traces even and have the back ban in the proper place. That decision was based primarily on the size of the mule. The mule traces(chains) generally last for a good number of years, or until one would trade off the old mule for a younger mean mule that would jump and break a trace. If a family living in the community gets sick and was not able to work for some time, it would be a common practice to see several people with their mule and plow helping their neighbor.

Educational and religious speaking, most every rural community had a church and a small school located in close proximity of each other. The school was generally a one, two or three teachers, the Principal being one of the teachers. This school system was highly organized by the county Superintendent of schools that was responsible to the state Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The churches were generally small too, very highly organized holding membership with their church organization in the rural areas of the county are the Baptist and Methodist. These two church

organizations and others carry a long time interesting history of their origin and development. (In future articles we will write about the origin of the Lumber River Conference) It is the purpose of the writer to let us read and study together just why do we have churches come together as a unit to worship God? Also, while we are reading and studying together, shall we take a real look at some of the conditions we find ourselves in that has become typical of the county, state, and nation. The crime rate is higher, there are several murder cases in the county unsolved to-day. Does this seem right, while the number of churches are increasing, the number of murders increasing? The same is true of the divorce rate, child support, stealing, breaking and entering, drug abuse and many others.

Some of our large church organizations sponsor college and universities in this country as well as overseas play a different role on a larger scale. Traveling particularly in rural areas for one to observe the school and church building as well as the farm homes and farm houses, tells us a lot about the people and their concerns.

It would be a real good piece of research project to share the organizational church programs, to learn how one deals with their individual problems in the church, to read your by-laws or constitutions of order, and to learn about any other important things not mentioned that go on from time to time in these many fine beautiful church buildings in this country.

In my 35 years working with school children, people and school personnel, 30 years in North Carolina and 5 years in South Carolina with a continuous up-dating our school systems to not be able to solve money problems, maybe we should take a serious look into our homes and church programs O.K.?

There seems to be a mutual feeling that there are several church organizations in the county that one does not know about the other. And what one is doing is somewhat funny to the others. For example: I said to a small group the other day that our conference, The Lumber River Conference has two former Bishops living as the United States has three former Presidents they laughed and inquired-we know the Presidents names-what are the names of the Bishops? Do I have my reading audiences' attention? Are you with me thinking about your church organization? Is it for granted that we just go to church every Sunday for fifty years or so and not realize any growth for ourselves or the church

people? Some of mankind's most serious problems may be found where you least expect them.

"In the home with Daddy and Momma and the children. The home may be a well constructed beautiful building, made of brick, cement and steel. The location designed about the right distance from the highway under a group of green trees. As you enter the front with two cars under the garage, push the door bell that rings a beautiful tune and you are invited in. There are also many mobile homes in Robeson County that carry this same type of living conditions that is far better than we have ever known in rural areas. There are modern conveniences that anyone could have, town or country. Notice that we have just been invited into the home, it could be a long article within itself to write about the findings. The parents come and go well dressed working on the job earning a comfortable living for the family. Say, let's look at the furniture, electrical appliances and all the other things that make for a comfortable living. There are so many questions one could ask about these homes. Going away back in history to our mother country, England considered a man's home his castle and is treated very privately. It is somewhat like visiting the White House or President's home in Washington, DC. Visitors only see certain outer fringes of the living quarters and are not allowed to see on the inside of the real living quarters of the presidents. As the old saying goes, "One can not know about a book just looking at the cover." About the closest one may discern about the values (philosophical analysis) the parents and the children as they go in and out of these homes causes one to really wonder, just what is there behind those closed doors? The number and kind of books found on the shelves, the amount of drinks and the type found in the refrigerator, etc. The example of L-O-V-E and appreciation for each other is considered very important. What about reverence of God at each meal time that you will find what is said during the happiest time of the day, children will take note of earlier in life than you might think.

For our sisters and brothers walking on fine carpet, sitting in our very comfortable church pew with stained glass windows could be another exciting trip for an interesting piece of research to try to answer, why do we have so many church organizations in Robeson County?

Long years of teaching experiences or other professional experiences does not necessarily give one the answers to human problems. Yes, right off someone could say as a fifth grader 11 years old-look to God to solve everything-we agree-but, and a great big but, how are you going to get a person to look you straight in the eye and tell the truth or treat his fellow man right so God can help them with serious problems or share good blessings with them?

There are so many governmental programs nowadays with forms to fill out, one has to be real careful not to tell the untruth, or become completely complacent about matters of honesty, with integrity in the home, church and school community.

A unified strong church organization that carry respect that will up hold high christian principals could have a far reaching influence with people that get up each morning going to work in our many county, state, and federal positions that make contact with a whole lot of people during the day. A church organization, as well as any type organization need outstanding men and women well trained in leadership roles who may relate very well with people. Small church organizations may not have the financial means to support colleges and universities, however, could we look at our own individuals in our respective communities and set aside a small amount of funds to help motivate someone to continue their studies in secondary and higher education? Who will try?

Readers, will you stop! look! and listen! at what is going on in the inside of your church organization in Robeson County? Well, we have

locked in many other areas of organization and have not found the answer to our serious problems. We are not just being critical- it's a fact to take a look at the many millions of federal dollars spent in Robeson County through the years of LRDA, the Food Stamp Program, the welfare and Social Services Department, Mental Health and general health agencies. All of these agencies, we are sure have helped a lot of people, but whenever a lady is working on the job and is shot at and robbed is becoming a common thing to happen in Robeson County, the home of two higher learning institutions, Robeson Technical College and Pembroke State University. Many other counties in the state are not this fortunate to have these institutions of learning.

Now, church organizations are a very touchy matter and the people are really sincere. Believe me, it is taking a lot of courage to write about us. It is considered to be most sacred of the sacrifices of the past. For example, if someone expresses a desire of change at Hopewell Church where I have been a member and still am a member, for 50 years, you have all the older people to deal with (the cemetery is nearby) living or dead. You see, by the time you hear about what our parents and grandparents look for, and new techniques of training fall by the way side. We are continuously living in the past, rather than the present and future planning.

Shall we return? Church organizations in Robeson County. Yes. The church. Has the church trace chain faster even-wore thin-would a new idea finish breaking it? Are you about ready to use a larger chain, say a log chain pulled behind one of those big tractors, rather than a poor mule? The size, numbers exercises strengths and influences power when needed. Fifty years, as spoke of above brings on a whole lot of change, good and bad, different and indifferent. A big, big question? Should a church organization have any influence in making political decisions outside the church? If appears that a church group made up with strong Christians who go to make up a church conference organization would be a very powerful

organization, that the influence would be felt in the county, political or otherwise. Many of us our age remember very well the Christian influence that was felt in the various rural areas of the county. Of course, the influence of education and religion found in the towns and cities of Robeson County were the controlling forces of education and the political wheel of the county.

Now that we have a more equal share of the pie, all races of people serving together on the county board of education, county commissioners, etc. By so doing, have we lost our pride, love and appreciation for our children's educational religious principles? We have been taught by great educators of the past the concept of learning, an abstract or generic idea generalized from particular instances. If we take into consideration the importance of living examples for our youth, what has happened in recent years of our leadership roles in our schools and churches? Where is the great influences of the church and church organizations when we have just about anybody on the board of education with political expediency of having staff members and school principals with more than one living wife at the head of our schools as an example for our children. O.k. that's an old fashioned idea to think this way in 1982-yes- I know- then we wonder why our hours are broken into- the doors locked every night, the gun under the bed. Let's not be silly with important matters- You better have it under your pillow loaded. My preachers for the most part (Lumber River Conference) have long given-up-it's a sign of the times. Jesus is coming soon! If He does not hurry up and come on, He is going to meet a bunch of tired people standing and waiting.

If we had the power of God in our church organizations- we could send just one godly man with God and a few people that would be the majority with God to tell ole Pharaoh, not of Egypt but of Lumberton to let my people go under the right type of leadership.

Next time: "Why Do We Have So Many Churches?"

PINEY GROVE SCHOOL: An Educational House

by Lee Helen Thompson
For years Piney Grove School has taken much pride in its endeavor to educate each child to his/her potential; educationally, socially, mentally and physically. This has not been done only through textbooks, but through involvement; resources and resource persons.

We thrive on first-hand news and events. To accomplish this we call in the Fire Chief to explain Fire Safety and the work of the fireman. To learn "How A Bill Becomes Law," we call in our Legislators and Senator; to learn more about dental health, we call in a Dental Hygienist. To learn more on highway safety, we call on the District Highway Patrol. There was a need to up-date, move and renovate the play ground area. This was accomplished by placing the play ground in what was a thickly wooded area, but now has been cleared and is shady, thanks to the Saddletree Community Volunteers.

With the financial support of interested persons, parents and patrons and volunteers, we have built a concrete screened-in picnic area for school and community usage. Our athletic department is on the move upward. With support and help from parents and interested persons, a modern baseball diamond has been erected with "dug-outs" for each team and a concession stand.

Piney Grove School is a school of cordiality. Our doors are always open to visitors. Superintendent Purnell Sweet, his Associate, Assistants, Central Staff, school board members, county commissioners, state senator, and House of Representatives members are often invited to come out and share meals with us. Each year the Saddletree Senior Citizens look forward to and enjoy delicious meals with Principal Grady Locklear in our lunch room. Parents are extended open invitations to come out and eat with their children. The Title One programs, reading, math and Migrant Education have changed to Chapter One Programs. So as to keep the parents informed, a tea was held in the Math Lab to explain the program to parents.

Students of Piney Grove are given culture and social growth through field trips and visits to performances at the PSU Performing Arts Center. Clubs and supervised social activities are held at least four nights a year.

Piney Grove has a PTA that is to be commended, it cannot be praised enough. There is always something going on to make Piney Grove the BEST.

We take pride in Piney Grove for surely it is an educational house, an involved house and a much used house.

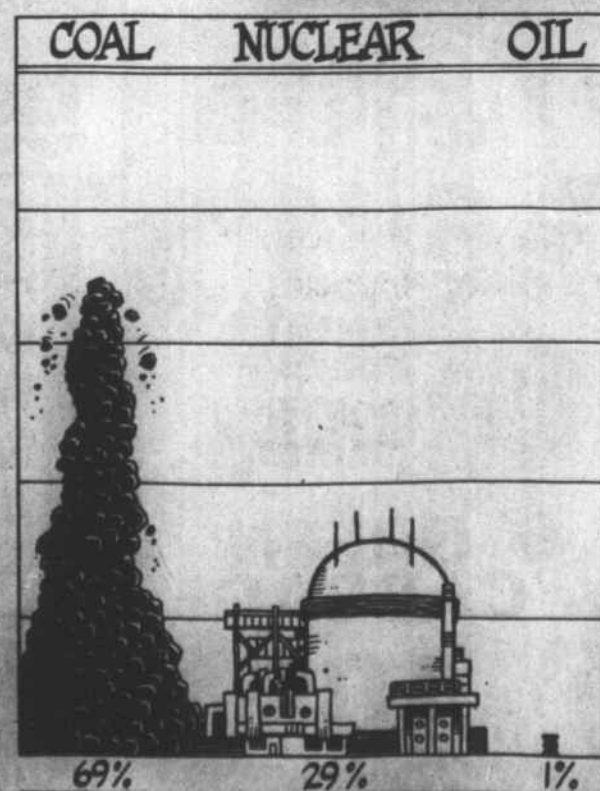


Lauren Elizabeth Sampson

Celebrates First Birthday

Little Elizabeth Sampson celebrated her 1st Birthday on December 8th 1982 with a party in her home. Attending were some of her little friends and everyone had a good time eating cake. She is the daughter of Kelvin and Karen Sampson in Butte, Montana. The grandparents are Mr. & Mrs. Willie Von Lowry and Mr. & Mrs. John W. Sampson of Pembroke, NC

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