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## DISMISSED CHURCH OF GOD. MINISTERS SEEK REDRESS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

by Bruce Barton

Lumberton- Some 350-500 supporters showed up Sunday afternoon at the Lumberton Armory in Lumberton to hear publicly what happened in regard to the recent dismissals of Rev. Jack Hunt, Rev. C.C. Allen, Jr. and the Rev. Stefford Smith.

A part of the meeting was taken up with a public accounting of what happened the previous Sunday when District Overseer, R.P. Fields, and a coterie, arrived at Pembroke Church of God and Riverside Church of God in Lumberton (during morning services) and at Eastside Church of God in Fayetteville (during the evening service) and read a letter of dismissal to the three pastors openly before the respective congregations.

The letter Fields read was from State Overseer Harold R. Thompson. The letter said in part, "It is sad, indeed, when a man will sink so low as to deliberately undermine and advocate insubordinate actions against the church that has supported him and given him a place to minister."

In a telephone interview Thompson claimed that the three pastors—Hunt, Smith and Allen, Jr.—"were part of an element within the Pembroke District that was advocating the withholding of regular reports to the state and national offices. They were sowing discord and something had to be done about it."

### THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN...

But according to Rev. C.C. Allen, Jr., pastor of Eastside Church of God in Fayetteville; Rev. Jack Hunt, pastor of Pembroke Church of God; and Rev. Stefford Smith, pastor of Riverside Church of God in Lumberton, there is another side to the coin, another point of view.

Said Rev. Allen, "If Moses was justified in leading the people out of Egyptian bondage, then we are justified... God does not want his people bound."

Allen also noted that State Overseer Thompson was less than poetic in

replying to his rationale for resisting his dismissal. Allen said, "When I tried to quote him scripture and minutes of the Church of God to support my stance he (Thompson) said, 'Bologna!' and hung up on me! I was shocked, to say the very least."

### WHAT WAS SAID AT SUNDAY EVENING'S MEETING

All three ministers addressed the audience Sunday evening and recounted some of the frustrations that culminated in their ultimate dismissal as ministers of the Church of God, with national offices in Cleveland, Tenn.

An emerging pattern of broken promises, condescension, and a seeming lack of respect developed from the presentations. Smith noted, "I have been trying to get something done for some two years."

An example noted by Rev. Hunt was an incident involving an ethnic advisory council set up by the district and state offices of the Church of God. The advisory council was supposed to have input in any decision made affecting the Pembroke District.

According to the ministers, the church leadership showed bad faith by appointing members to the advisory council without advise and consent by the local Indian pastors.

More than this, without advising the ministers in the district, the church leadership split the Pembroke District (made up of eleven churches) into two districts, the Saddletree District and the Hestertown District. Both pastors are non-Indian.

Two, the Indian ministers questioned whether the church's leaders would allow Indian ministers to pastor a predominately white church although they assigned white pastors to Indian congregations without much thought about racial implications.

Said Rev. Hunt, "The thing that bothers me most of all is that a man is innocent or he is supposed to be—until

proven guilty. Yet, they came to our church that Sunday and read the charges and declared me guilty as charged. He (Fields) put my name down in the dirt without giving me a chance to defend myself."

A petition was circulated at Sunday's meeting that declared:

"We the undersigned, respectfully petition and beseech all those who know and love Almighty God to hear and redress the grievances described below which are destroying the Church of God in NC.

"1. The Indian people of this State are not accorded their rightful voice in the affairs of the Church;

"2. Due consideration should be given to the appointment of an Indian overseer in predominately Indian districts;

"3. Due consideration should be given to the appointment of duly ordained Indian ministers to the pastoral posts of predominately Indian churches;

"4. Appointments to the Ethnic Advisory Council should be of duly ordained ministers;

"5. Due consideration should be given to the appointment of Indian ministers to the pastoral posts of predominately White churches; and,

"6. The Church, above all institutions should be mindful of the due process rights of individuals to the extent that one is presumed innocent until guilt is established.

"Each of the persons whose signature appears below specifically and publicly declares his or her support of the collective efforts of the Rev. Jack Hunt, the Rev. C.C. Allen, Jr. and the Rev. Stefford Smith to redress the grievances or concerns above. We respectfully request that they be restored to their rightful places in the Church of God."

At last count some five hundred people had signed the petition.

Although barred from the churches, each of the respective pastors attended their churches last Sunday although Pembroke and Eastside cancelled Sunday night services because of the involvement with the public meeting at the Armory. But each of the ministers reiterated, "I (Hunt, Allen and Smith) will be at church in the pulpit until a court order makes us do otherwise."

The Carolina Indian Voice has found out that a court order might not be long in coming. A lawyer in Wilmington, Jay D. Hackenbury, according to our source, has written each of the pastors a letter in effect, saying, "I have been retained by the state office of the Church of God and this letter is to inform you that you are forbidden to put foot on the property of the Pembroke Church of God, the Eastside Church of God and the Riverside Church of God."

The letter went on to say that the pastors should realize that the property of the local church does not belong to the local congregation but does in fact belong to the Church of God."

Rev. C.C. Allen, Jr. notes, "I am already assured by the word of God that it will be resolved and the Church of God will be strengthened from this and will do mightier works in the future."

But, sadly, Allen noted, "I hoped it would never come to this: church men ought to be able to resolve their differences without having to go to court. That seems like something Sears and Roebuck might do, not the Church of God."

R.P. Fields, in a telephone conversation said, "I am sorry that it came to this. I helped organize three churches in that area—those are good people down there. I was the one that organized the Pembroke Church of God, for instance."

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## Board of Directors of Historical Drama meet

The Board of Directors of Robeson Historical Drama, Inc. held its first meeting of the 1979 season for "Strike at the Wind!" the outdoor drama sponsored by the organization.

The well-attended meeting provided the first presentation of the new general manager, Bill Thompson, to the board. Mr. Thompson was given a special vote of support from the board in his efforts to promote the drama.

Mr. Larry Brooks and Mr. Julian Pierce were elected to the board at the meeting.

Mrs. Mary L. Sanderson was officially announced as the new assistant manager beginning February 5th.

In his report to the board, Mr. Thompson announced plans for a "kick-off" banquet for the 1979 membership campaign. According to the new manager, "Every effort will be made this year to persuade as many people as possible in North and South Carolina and particularly Robeson County to become a part of the organization."

Other projects outlined included step-up promotion of tour groups and increased publicity efforts through radio, television, newspapers, and magazines.

Chairman Adolph Dial said, "This year holds great potential for 'Strike at the Wind!' I believe that we have the finest staff ever and with the help of the people of Robeson County, this drama can become a tremendous asset to the tourist economy of the area."

## Miss Pembroke Jr. High



Shown above is Miss Charmaine Locklear, the reigning Miss Pembroke Junior High School. She will relinquish her title on Friday night, Feb. 2, 1979 in the PSU Performing Arts Center. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Locklear of Pembroke. For more information on the Miss Pembroke Junior High Pageant, see page 8 of this issue of The Carolina Indian Voice.

## PEOPLE AND LAND THINGS... C E S

### PEMBROKE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE PLANNED

The Pembroke Senior High School staff will hold Open House February 5, 1979, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. for parents of all students attending Pembroke Senior High School. The purpose of the open house is to give parents a brief orientation of the school, test programs, and financial aid available to students. Parents will also be given an opportunity to visit classrooms and talk with their child's teachers.

We cordially invite all parents to attend Open House. This is an opportunity for you to support your children and their school.

### PLATE SALE PLANNED

A plate sale is planned at the Deep Branch Volunteer Fire Department. The sale will be held on Saturday, Feb. 3 at 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. Fish, chicken and barbeque plates will be sold for \$2.50 each. Proceeds will be used for the benefit of the fire department, according to Chief Billy Burns.

### INAUGURATION TO BE HELD

The Board of Trustees of Bacone College, the Administration, the Faculty, and the Student Body request the honor of your presence and your guests at the inauguration of Dr. Pasquale Dean Chavers as the 14th President of Bacone College on Sunday, March 11, at 3 p.m. The event will be held at the Muskogee Fine Arts Auditorium, adjacent to Bacone College in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MEETING SCHEDULED

An aviation and public transportation public meeting for transportation improvement will be held Feb. 21, at 7:30 p.m. for Division Six at the O.P. Owens Auditorium in Lumberton. Division Six is composed of Bladen, Columbus, Cumberland, Harnett and Robeson Counties.

28 public hearings across the state will be held to solicit input from individual citizens, local officials, and county leaders in the annual update of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is the basic planning document for the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) that balances anticipated revenues against estimated project expenditures.

## Rally Planned on Highway Patrol Actions

A gathering of concerned citizens about highway patrol actions will take place Saturday, February 3, at 7 p.m. in the gymnasium of Pembroke Junior High School in Pembroke.

The group has 2 major concerns; (1) legal defense of Tony Blue, a recent victim of alleged brutality by the highway patrol, and (2) non violent methods of redressing the abuse of minorities and poor people by law enforcement agencies.

A. Bruce Jones, executive director of the N.C. Commission of Indian Affairs, said, "I plan to attend this meeting."

In the case of Tony Blue, the N.C. Commission of Indian Affairs met with Herbert Hyde, Secretary of Crime Control and Public Safety on Monday, January 22.

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## Linda Locklear, Miss Capitol City



Linda Gail Locklear, Miss Capitol City

Linda Gail Locklear, a former Miss Lumbee, became Miss Capitol City on Saturday night. The pageant was held at the Pittman Auditorium of St. Mary's College in Raleigh. Miss Locklear performed a dance routine to Herb Albert and the Tijuana Brass Band as her talent competition.

The Raleigh Jaycees usually sponsor a Miss Raleigh Pageant, this year however that organization will sponsor the Miss North Carolina Pageant. To insure representation of the Capital City in the Miss North Carolina Pageant, the Capitol City Jaycees this year sponsored the Miss Capitol City Pageant. Miss Locklear, therefore, is the first Miss Capitol City and will compete in the Miss North Carolina Pageant.

Miss Locklear, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Chavis of Route 3, Maxton, will make her first appearance as Miss Capitol City at the Miss Durham Pageant on Friday night, Feb. 2. She serves as coordinator of public information services for the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs in Raleigh.

Miss Locklear expressed her enthusiasm at winning the title of Miss Capitol City. Said she, "I am honored to be Miss Capitol City. All my accomplishments can be directly related back to my reign as Miss Lumbee. The support I received from my own people gave me confidence and a desire to achieve more and more."

"Of course, I could not begin to put into words what Mrs. Florence Ransom, official chaperone for Miss Lumbee, has meant to my life. She has encouraged me and always insisted that I do the very best that I could. Although I am no longer Miss Lumbee, I still feel a closeness to Mrs. Ransom. She still encourages me and inspires me. She drove all the way to Raleigh by herself on Saturday to see me compete for the title," she continued.

Miss Locklear also spoke fondly of Lumbee Regional Development Association in Pembroke where she was once employed.

The title of Miss Capitol City carries many benefits, in addition to the prestige and the opportunity to compete for Miss North Carolina. Miss Locklear was a scholarship to the John Jaycees Power School of Leadership and academic scholarship.

## Pembroke Jaycees Awards Banquet



The Pembroke Jaycees held their Awards Banquet on Wednesday night, January 31, 1979 at the Jaycees

Shown left to right are: Dr. James B. Chavis, Boss of the Year Award winner; Dexter Brooks, recipient of

Jaycees; Lacy Cummings, Outstanding Young Farmer; and David Locklear, Outstanding Young

Gerald Maynor, last year's Boss of the Year; Carnell Locklear, last year's recipient of the DSA Award; Lyrerous Lowry, last year's Outstanding Young Farmer; and Elizabeth Brooks, Outstanding Young Educator for last year. (Bill Hunt photo)

Hut. Special guest speaker was John Ingram, North Carolina Commissioner of Insurance.

the Distinguished Service Award; John Ingram, guest speaker; Gregg Cummings, President of Pembroke

Educator. Making the presentations were: Dr.