

## Reader's Forum

### Reader says AISES Pow Wow held on Saturday at PSU was really impressive

Dear Ms. Conner:  
Painted Turtle and I had a part in a workshop at Pembroke State University for a program called American Indian Science and Engineer Society. We both felt good about it. What really impressed me was the hometown people who were involved from the bottom up. I thought Dr. Freda Porter-Locklear did a wonderful job in organizing it. She and the students deserve a big "Job Well Done." Now I am not saying this because I had a part in it. I went to a couple of the other workshops there.

An old classmate of mine, David Wilkins, gave a great lecture. Dr. Wilkins has really come a long way. The students really impressed me. They were a fine group of students, very intelligent, and they had good values.

I did have a discussion with a student which left me with a lot on my mind. It was not the family problem she had that bothered me so much. It was her spiritual problem that got to me. She said she had turned away from Church and, believe me, she had in her mind some good reasons. She said if she wanted to sleep she would rather do it at home. Maybe she needs to hear Rev. Bill James Locklear preach. She stated that a lot of people in the Church let her down. I told her that the Devil is a smart creature. He does have to work hard in bars, but he does put all his overtime in the Church. I am told that people will let you down all the time and some Christians will let you down some of the time, but the Almighty will never let you down. The real problem was that she was a very intelligent young person, and I got to thinking about all the smart people who have thought their way straight into Hell. You see, the Almighty didn't tell us to think our way into Heaven. He said we only had to believe. Then I thought of Proverbs 12:15: "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise." So I realized the Almighty was using me to speak to

her and that she had come to be seeking counseling. What really got to me was I felt just like here at one time.

I remember something that happened in my life that made me feel like I didn't want to step inside a church again. I told myself I can walk in the woods and feel close to God. Now, before I go any further, this is true. But if a person really wants to reach their full spiritual potential, they must establish a one-on-one relationship with the Almighty. To do this takes a lot of faith. I am not using the word faith as a lot of people use it today, such as what faith are you? To me the word faith is a verb. It is something you do, and yes it will be tested a lot in the world today. So now that I'm Young and Smart, I know that Church is where faith grows and develops, or to me that is what they should be about. The Good Book teaches us that Jesus is the Head of the Church. I remember a saying that went something like this: "If you want to get to know someone, you've got to get into their Head." Believe me, I want to get to know Jesus.

I did challenge her by saying, "You are just what Churches need, a young intelligent person who knows what Churches should be doing." I told her she shouldn't walk away from the Church but she should be walking to Church. She said she was just one person and I reminded her that so was Jesus. But you know to change the world, it only takes one simple thing, you. So, if you want to change the world, start with yourself.

One of the other problems people have with church is that it should challenge you to become a full grown Christian. Now I have a lot of growing to do in the Lord. We have a lot of immature Christians telling others what to do. Which leads me to the point, we should all be more "christ-like" and "walk our Talk." That is what will make people want to return to church.

What I am talking about is a term I call "Comfort Zones," our own

personal attitude toward life and reality. Some of us don't want to be challenged. Some people are comfortable right where they are. But what if Jesus had that same attitude and would have just hung around Bethlehem. We might never have heard of Him. I am reminded of Luke 4:24 "And He said, Verily I say unto you, no prophet is accepted in his own country."

Now let's not jump to any conclusions and think I am telling everyone to leave Pembroke to become prophets. What I am saying is that sometimes we must get out of our comfort zones to grow and learn. Remember how it felt the first day at school? All those new faces? The teachers? What about how big the school looked? Then the last day of school you didn't want to leave because you grew comfortable with your surroundings.

So after talking with this young lady, I asked her if I could pray for her. She agreed. So I got another on my prayer list. I would like to ask everyone put her and everyone like her on your prayer list. Pray that she opens her heart to the Almighty and allows him inside and that she finds her way back to church so she can grow and develop her faith. To all of you who don't go to church because something happened to you, remember this: "The world and people are no reason to keep you out of church. They are the reason we need to go to church so we can pray for them." Then, and only then will your feelings of spiritual emptiness end. There is an old Native American saying, "Sometimes the best way to solve our problems is to help someone who has the same problem."

To all our churches, let's be about the real business of church. Not just business, but making disciples for Christ.

In the True Way  
Derek Lowry  
Greensboro, NC

## Reflections

by Alta Nye Oxendine

### Explanation

Last time I planned to say:  
"Someday I hope to get paid in cash for free lance writing. IN the meantime, even though I have received a little cash in a couple of situations and have been PAID in MANY OTHER WAYS for writing REFLECTIONS, most people seem to view my many hours of writing simply as one of my leisure-time activities." I want to add that the experience of writing down my own thoughts and reflections (with total freedom to experiment and explore the use of a variety of styles and forms) has enriched my life tremendously—especially since the trauma of our family's accident.

Again I'm putting the story "Brown is Beautiful" on hold, to comment on current events.

**Winter Olympics**  
This week I've enjoyed the Winter Olympic coverage and those beautiful scenes from Norway. Long before this I got tired of hearing about Tonya Harding. But then I realized that she and Nancy Kerrigan, along with Dan Jansen, Doug Kennedy, and all the other disappointed non-winners (as well as the medalists) need our prayers. Also Tonya's ex-husband, Jeff, and the others involved in the plot to injure another top-notch skater, I'm glad Kerrigan was not side-lined the way Monica Sellars has been. Let's also include Monica (and her attacker) in our prayers.

My mother-in-law, "Miss Lizzie" was right! She told me that she prayed each day for the whole world, and every night, I believe we ALL ought to do the same.

**Valentine's Day**  
Another Valentine's Day has come and gone. This was my thirteenth Valentine's as a widow. I still have the fancy, expensive valentine Leon sent to me in Montana in 1959, six months before we were married. During our twenty-plus year marriage my husband always gave me a nice card on Valentine's Day.  
Whenever Leon and/or the children

Over the past few weeks I've received several letters as well as many personal responses to an article I wrote about Lumbee Regional Development Association (LRDA). For the most part, the response was overwhelmingly positive. Most folks found it to be an unbiased and informative article. A couple of the board members were not real pleased. They wanted me to only talk about the good LRDA has contributed to the community. On the other hand a few folks felt I had white washed LRDA and had not exposed the problems that LRDA has.

I feel the article served the purpose for which it was written. I wanted to inform the public of the many programs and opportunities LRDA makes available to the area. By focusing on the positive aspects of the agency, yes Wiz, there are some, someone in need may be helped. If we, as a people don't help each other, who will?

LRDA has a place in the community. We must remember that LRDA is made up of people. Some of these people have over the years worked for the good of the Indian community. Some have not. In the years to come, let's keep the good, use their talents and experience to build a better place for our children. Demand they get the job done or supply them with the opportunity to work elsewhere.

were away on a trip. I would wait for an hour after the time I expected them back, start getting anxious, imagine they might be on the verge of an accident, and begin praying. Except for that last trip Leon had told me that he had to keep selling vegetables until he had \$300.00 to take to the bank when they returned that Tuesday afternoon. In the money pouch patrolmen handed me was exactly \$300.00. (It was a day or two before it got delivered to the bank.)

Soon after the accident I decided (like many others seem to do) that I could remarry and still have a happy

LRDA is kind of like my 1978 El Camino, the brakes need work and sometimes there is a lot of unnecessary noise under the hood, but it still is a good truck, and performs many services that would not get done if I didn't have it.

To think that LRDA will fold up shop and go away after we adopt a tribal constitution is a bit naive and unrealistic. All of us agree that most organizations, from the U.S. Senate to the deacon board of the local church, have problems. Let's take action to fix whatever the problems might be. Let's use the system to make LRDA run smoother. Let's use the electoral process to throw out the folks who aren't working for the good of our people. Let's do the work needed to get LRDA to pass inspection and continue to drive. Does all this mean I am Pro-LRDA. Well, it means I am anti-stupidity, I am anti-ignorance and most of all, I am pro-Indian. I am for whatever is good for our people and our community. If LRDA fits that shoe, I am certainly willing to let them wear it.

While Wiz and I may not always see eye to eye on the LRDA issue, even he will agree the Indian community is better off having LRDA, with its faults than not having LRDA at all.

Rick Barton, president  
First American Publications

life. But what if I just stayed single? Could I possibly be happy? I did not want to think about that.

Well, here I am, thirteen and a half years later, still single. And, most of the time these days I am as happy as I have EVER been, even in my younger days. Of course, I am STILL blessed with more "family" than many others have. Not only do my daughter and son-in-law remember me in some special way each Valentines Day, they put their love into action ALL YEAR LONG, as far as their two widowed mothers are concerned.

# Berea Baptist Church Renews Commitment to Ministry and Missions

For more than half a century, Berea Baptist Church has been a part of the Pembroke community. Under the leadership of Rev. Bruce Swett, the congregation is trying a new approach to the original goal of the Church, ministering to the community. The recent innovative programs include programs for the youth, as well as the elderly.

Recently Berea Baptist honored their senior adults with gifts, dinner, fellowship, and entertainment.

Youth activities have included a weekend youth rally at Kay Arthur's Precept in Chattanooga, Tennessee. During this retreat the youth became more familiar with the many names of God and how it applies to their daily lives. They sponsored several fund raising events to help with the expenses for their trip.

The youth have instituted an Adopt-a-Mother Program and have an active program whereby they visit the elderly in the community.

One of the programs that they are most proud of is their missionary work with the Choctaw Indians in Ripley, TN. Seventeen members of a missionary team spent a week with the Choctaws at First Indian Church in Ripley. The purpose for them was to share the joy of knowing God. While there the mission team conducted Vacation Bible School and home visitation.

Berea also took a greater step toward mission work and hosted a missionary for the World Mission Conference. The pastor, Rev. Bruce Swett was a part of the World Help Missions and journeyed to Russia and had the opportunity to share Bibles as well as the gospel with people in Russia, Hungary, Romania.

The church also now has their first student in Seminary. They are sponsoring Shonda Locklear who attends Seminary and she will become a missionary.

The recent homecoming at Berea was one of the first that many of the members could remember. Prior to the homecoming the congregation took part in a two week spiritual renewal. During the first week they concentrated inwardly and prayed for themselves. During the second week they concentrated outwardly and prayed for others. The idea was that each one must be right with God himself, before he can make intercessory prayer for others.

Other activities of the church have included a Deacon's Retreat, Couples Retreat, an Easter Cantata, Children and Adults Christmas Cantata, Watch Night Service, the Lord's Supper during the new year by candlelight, as well as a ski trip to Boone, NC.

### A Historical Sketch of Berea Baptist Church

In 1918 Mr. E.L. Odum, a resident of Robeson, shared with Miss Mary Livermore, another native Robesonian who was working with the Thomasville Baptist Orphanage, his desire to donate 571.2 acres of land for an Indian Orphanage and Indian training center for ministers. Miss Livermore shared the information with the leadership of Burnt Swamp Baptist Association of the Cherokee Indians of Robeson County. That organization is now the Burnt Swamp Baptist Association, and the seed for a new work began.

The school was completed in 1925 on the former Odum property and training classes for ministers began.

With permission from the Association, a group of Baptist began meeting in the training school for worship and Bible study.

By the end of the year these same worshippers requested the school property and it was granted to them.

In August of 1926 the group met to organize and called the new work, Berea Baptist Church. Charter members included: Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Oxendine, Mr. and Mrs. E.B. Sampson, Mr. and Mrs. Evander Hunt, Mr. Bennie Chavis, Mr. Jodie Oxendine, Mrs. Charity Oxendine, Mr. Ashley Oxendine, Miss Bessie Oxendine, Mrs. Annie Lizzie Locklear, and Rev. I. W. Jacobs.

Berea is now experiencing changes through the leadership of Rev. Bruce Swett. Swett is full of energy and has a desire to lead new and deeper growth among the membership. Rev. Swett has used his special gift in music and personal relations to win new souls and awaken sleeping saints. A new musical group, known as the Bereans, are a testimony to this growing spirit.

In addition, Berea has officially begun a building program which will totally re-structure the present facilities and erect a spacious, modern sanctuary. The pastor and the congregation encourages everyone to become a part of the spiritual growth at Berea Baptist Church.

Berea Baptist Church is the epitome of their Homecoming prayer: "Faith of our Fathers, renew us again. And make us a Church Family of God-fearing men. Seeking Thy guidance, Thy love, and Thy will. For we are but Pilgrims in need of Thee still."



Rev. Bruce Swett is shown in church in Russia.



Wak-a-thon for Odum Home



Rev. Bruce Swett is shown giving out Bibles in Russia.



A view of the Celebration to Honor Senior Adults



Adrenna Scott is shown with youth from Choctaw Nation



Youth shown at youth rally.



First Indian Church in Ripley, TN.



Youth visit elderly with gifts.



Youth are shown at Youth Rally in Tennessee