

Forest Church of God In Christ Inc.
5809 Wreay Dr.
Fort Worth, Texas 76119
May 23, 2013

To: The Honorable Bishop Charles E. Blake
The General Board of the International Churches of God In Christ

The Forest Hill Church of God in Christ was jointly founded by Elder Henry Henderson (now deceased) and Missionary Ethey M. Henderson. The first mission started called Friendship COGIC originated in the Philippines while Elder Henderson was in the military.

Elder and Sister Henderson started Forest Hill COGIC when they were stationed in Fort Worth, Texas. This church is located on the out skirts of Fort Worth, 5809 Wreay Dr. in (Forest Hill). The church is affiliated with the Texas Northeast jurisdiction whose jurisdictional prelate is Bishop J. Neaul Haynes, Dallas, Texas.

We are writing to request your assistance with a matter that has caused our church, along with its founding widow great distress and pain.

On March 31, 2013, Auxiliary Bishop R.L. Williams along with two other Elders came to our church seeking Elder John A. White our pastor at the time and former assistant to Elder Henderson. Elder White (who had informed us that he would resign as of July 1, 2013) was not at church that Sunday.

The following Sunday April 7, 2013 Elder White while at church was visited by Auxiliary Bishop R.L. Williams and two elders. The next Sunday, April 14, 2013 Elder White read another letter to the church stating that this Sunday would be his last Sunday and he would relinquish his position to the Auxiliary Bishop R.L. Williams.

According to Church of God In Christ guidelines, when a church is vacated the Bishop assumes the pastorate. There was no letter to date from Bishop Haynes or anyone acting in his stead regarding who was sent to oversea our church until another leader is placed. We were under the impression that our district superintendent would be in order but we stand to be corrected on that. A letter was addressed to Bishop J. Neaul Haynes, but there was no response. We understand that his daughter is his secretary and of course her husband is the Bishops son-in-law. There is no objectivity observed in this situation. In fact in reality, it is called nepotism. There has been no acknowledgement of the letter that was sent to his office regarding a leader for our church.

Bishop Reginald Lamont Williams who is an Auxiliary Bishop came to the church in a very negative, arrogant and spoke to us in degrading manner. If he is allowed to remain as pastor, this would no doubt mean oppression for our founding widow and the church.

In Bishop Williams' greeting and introduction of himself as assuming the pastorate of the church, he stated that: He asked if anyone had any questions or anything to say. He went on to say "I know church folk, they will not speak up and say anything but will talk amongst themselves;" when founding Widow Henderson spoke up to say that we have ministers who are capable of preaching or carrying on, he said in a disrespectful way "I don't need you to say anything Sis. Henderson".

He spoke of an anniversary service for Elder White and wife, without details of the agreement made between Elder White and the church concerning compensation; he spoke as though we had never shown them appreciation. He stated that he would communicate to Elder Oliver who had been an assistant under Elder White and that he assisted Elder Oliver in getting his ministerial license. He said emphatically that he does not want anyone coming into his office with any concerns. He let us know that he does not recognize or communicate with the head deacon, elders or the board that was already in place under Elder White (as required by the 501c-3 IRS) non-profit status.

He explained the difference between a pastor governed organization or church and a congregational governed organization. He stated emphatically that the Church of God in Christ is a Pastor governed organization.

Compensation: He stated what he expected in the way of compensation. He said that he would accept an offering. \$125.00 was taken up the first Sunday he preached and after service he (without recognizing the deacons or board of directors), asked the church secretary to write him a \$500.00 check. You can do the math, if we only take in a little more than \$800.00 and he takes 500.00 the church will not be able to pay the bills. He asked the members to give \$21.00 each and he does not contribute any offerings himself. On Sunday May 19, 2013 he not only received \$500.00 but paid another brother from Love Sanctuary COGIC \$50.00. This is highway robbery right before our eyes. This lack of integrity and spirit of greed should not be among God's people.

He was absent one Sunday, did not contact anyone until the last minute. We have to wait until he gets to the church, and then he has the audacity to say he preached the same message at his other church (Love Sanctuary COGIC, Fort Worth, TX). He is not considerate of our church family, comes in making changes without any discussion whatsoever. We are treated as though we have no voice. Needless to say, this is all wrong!

We have no mortgage but a line of credit (from the previous pastor) has put us in debt; we cannot afford to pay a salary until we have paid off the line of credit.

Additionally, he said in regard to the small stipend received by founding Widow Henderson in front of the congregation "Elder Henderson should have made provisions for his wife".

This is the church that Elder and mother Henderson along with a hand full of members built with their own personal finances, time and physical labor. In order to complete the

building that the church was housed in, Elder and mother Henderson sold their home and moved into an apartment with their son who was a baby at that time. Mother Henderson suffers with back problems from carrying lumbar & bricks to help with construction.

Our Concern: first of all, since we trust the leadership of Bishop Haynes and know he would not have handled the church as it is being handled by his son-in-law Auxiliary Bishop R.L. Williams.

Since we know Bishop Haynes handled our church with more empathy, kindness and compassion when our founding pastor died, we know that he certainly would not be as uncaring, degrading and callus as his son-in-law toward us. Because we know the challenges that Bishop Haynes is facing in his health, we are seeking relief from the National Church in the absence of his leadership. We are writing this letter seeking your assistance and relief for our founding widow Mother Ethey Henderson and our church. We pray that you will remedy this situation quickly. The auxiliary Bishop has been in place for a month now. He has been in attendance the following days: April 14, 21, 28, (May 5th absent) 12th and 19th.

Thank you in advance for your immediate assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

The church family of the Forest Hill Church of God In Christ

Contacts:

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CC: The General Board