

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 376

By Lamberth

A RESOLUTION to recognize and honor Roberts Tabernacle of Westmoreland.

WHEREAS, the many fine churches across this State constitute an institutional foundation for an orderly and just society for all Tennesseans, and their dedicated service to God and humanity is the bedrock upon which our State and nation are founded; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that we should recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations who, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, strive to enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such dynamic and historic community of faith is Roberts Tabernacle of Westmoreland, whose congregants have worshiped in Sumner County for more than ninety years; and

WHEREAS, the genesis of Roberts Tabernacle can be traced to the summer of 1927, when Bob Gregory began preaching under a grove of trees, thus instituting the "Bostic's Chapel" revival meetings and bringing the doctrine of the Church of God to the area; subsequent revivals took place at Sugar Grove, just down the road from Roberts Tabernacle's current location; and

WHEREAS, to get to these revival meetings, people came from miles around on horses, in wagons and buggies, or on foot; the altar, which was a rough piece of lumber nailed to a post set in the ground and surrounded by straw or sawdust, was dimly lit by makeshift lamps—teapots filled with coal oil with old rags twisted and threaded through the spouts for wicks—hung in the trees; and

WHEREAS, despite the less-than-ideal circumstances, these early congregants were hungry to hear the word of God and be filled with the Holy Spirit; even persecution from locals

could not deter them, such was their passion and devotion. In the early summer of 1929, when W.K. Gibson and his sister, Mary, began preaching in the area, there were as many as 100 at the altar at once; and

WHEREAS, that same year, Willie Lambert came to the area and convinced local resident Dunk Roberts to allow him and his brother, Walter, to build a brush arbor on the corner of his lot, where the west parking lot of Roberts Tabernacle is currently located; Mr. Roberts agreed and later donated the land upon which the original church building was located; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Lambert began conducting Sunday School; the ground for the brush arbor was cleared of bushes and briars by Lindy Lambert and several other women, and once the clearing was completed, the men snaked logs from the woods to build the arbor. Shortly after the brush arbor was constructed, W.K. Gibson and his followers joined them, and Mr. Gibson was thereafter asked to help organize the church; and

WHEREAS, the church was organized by W.K. Gibson and State Overseer L.A. Moxley; it was named Roberts Tabernacle in honor of the land donation by the Roberts family. Though the paperwork was not recorded in the State office until October 1929, the church was likely organized in late May or early June; and

WHEREAS, Mary Gibson, who later became the first pastor of Roberts Tabernacle (1930-1931), preached the first sermon in the original building; since that time, the church edifice has been reconstructed and remodeled four times, and the current sanctuary was added in 1976; and

WHEREAS, currently, Roberts Tabernacle partners with global missions by supporting three orphanages in India, a children's ministry in Kenya, and a mission in Mexico; the church also partners with the nations of Cyprus and Israel to support local churches there; and

WHEREAS, the influence of Roberts Tabernacle is far-reaching; it remains a "mother church" to many ministers and ministries around the globe; several with ties to the church have gone on to enjoy evangelistic and pastoral ministries that lasted many decades; and

WHEREAS, Roberts Tabernacle continues its impressive legacy of devoted fellowship and worship, serving as a testament to the enduring power of faith in action; and

WHEREAS, Roberts Tabernacle has become one of the great religious institutions and catalysts for positive spiritual change in our State and nation, as it has stood on the rock-solid foundation of Christian belief, service, and love for more than nine decades; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we recognize and honor Roberts Tabernacle of Westmoreland, commending the good people of this remarkable congregation for their notable service to their Lord and this State and wishing them much continued success and happiness in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.