



State of Louisiana

OFFICE OF

STATE INSPECTOR GENERAL

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHURCH-BASED TUTORIAL PROGRAM**

Report by

Inspector General Bill Lynch

Prepared for

Governor M.J. "Mike" Foster, Jr.

August 3, 1999

File No. 1-99-0092



State of Louisiana

**OFFICE OF
STATE INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**Department of Education
Church-Based Tutorial Program**

July 21, 1999

Report by

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be "BL", written over a horizontal line.

Inspector General Bill Lynch

Approved by

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be "M.F.", written over a horizontal line.

Governor M.J. "Mike" Foster, Jr.

File No. 1-99-0092

Department of Education

Church-Based Tutorial Program

Sylvia Morrow, a retired teacher, signed the name of a Natchitoches preacher on a state contract, a W-9 tax form and other documents in order to obtain a \$5,618 Church-Based Tutorial Program grant from the Department of Education, of which the preacher's church was to provide \$1,215. The preacher said he did not give Ms. Morrow permission to sign his name. The department actually paid \$1,472.04 to Shekinah Glory Church of God in Christ before discovering the improper signature and terminating the contract.

Background

The Department of Education's Church-Based Tutorial Program provides funding for church-based, after-school tutoring services to children, ages 5-18, who lack proficiency in basic academic skills, have a high rate of absenteeism, exhibit personality or social adjustment problems and are at risk of dropping out of school. The program's director is Cheryl Brown.

In the fiscal year ending June 30, 1998, the program expended about \$2.5 million. Churches, which contract with the department to provide the service, must agree to provide 25 percent of the approved funding for tutors' wages.

The department requested this office conduct an investigation of the 1997-98 contract with the Shekinah Glory Church of God in Christ in Natchitoches, the Rev. Richard Stampley, pastor. The investigation confirmed that Ms. Morrow and three tutors did provide after-school tutoring services to about 25 needy children for about three months.

The Contract

In the August, 1997, contract document between the department and the church, the department was to pay \$4,403, while the church was to provide another \$1,215 in matching funds.

In July, 1997, Ms. Morrow asked the Rev. Stampley to consider having his church sponsor such a program. The reverend had no objection, provided his church was not

required to obligate any money. Ms. Morrow assured him that she would coordinate the program with no cost to the church, he said.

Ms. Morrow completed the application for a contract, which the Rev. Stampley signed. The contract document was also signed "Richard Stampley." However, the Rev. Stampley said he did not sign the contract or associated documents. He said he never even saw the contract document, and would not have signed it if he had been aware of the matching funds requirement. He said he never gave Ms. Morrow permission to sign his name on anything.

Ms. Morrow admitted she signed the name of the reverend on the contract and other documents, including a W-9 tax form. She said she thought that since the Rev. Stampley was aware of the program and that she was the program's coordinator, it would be allowable for her to sign the reverend's name. She admitted that she did not have permission from the Rev. Stampley to sign his name.

The contract, with the reverend's name signed by Ms. Morrow, was issued by the department August 28, 1997. However, Ms. Brown, the program director, said the contract would not have been issued if the department had been aware the signature was not the Rev. Stampley's.

Ms. Brown said the contract was terminated after only three months when she learned after talking with the Rev. Stampley that the signature on the document was not his.

The Checks

As specified in the contract document, Ms. Morrow and the tutors were each to be paid for their services by the department at a rate of 75 percent of \$6.00 per hour. The other 25 percent of the payment was supposed to be made by the church.

Before the contract was terminated, two department checks for wages, totaling \$1,472.04, were cashed by Ms. Morrow. She equally divided the cash between herself and the three tutors. No other money was paid. All four worked only for the wages paid by the department, or 75 percent of what the contract document said they were to be paid.

The first check, for services in October and November, 1997, was for \$1,002.24. The second check, which Ms. Morrow re-directed for mailing to her home address instead of the church, was for services in December, 1998, for \$469.80. On the back of each check,

Ms. Morrow wrote the name of the church, then signed her name. She said that although she did not have permission from the Rev. Stampley to endorse the checks, she thought that since she was coordinating the program, she could do so.

However, she did not have the authority to endorse any check made payable to his church, said the Rev. Stampley.

Conclusions:

1. Sylvia Morrow signed without permission the Rev. Richard Stampley's signature on a contract document with the Department of Education, on a W-9 Tax Form and other associated documents.
2. Ms. Morrow cashed checks totaling \$1,472.04 made payable to the church without authority to do so.
3. By signing the Rev. Stampley's signature on the contract document, Ms. Morrow received \$1,472.04 from the department through a contract that was improperly obtained.

Recommendation:

1. A copy of this report should be forwarded for review to the Department of Education.

Response:

A response to this report from Ms. Morrow is attached.

1112 Lake Street
Natchitoches, LA 71457
July 19, 1999

State of Louisiana
Office of State Inspector General
P. O. Box 94095
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9095

Dear Mr. Lynch:

I received your communication dated July 12, 1999 on July 15, 1999. Upon thoroughly reviewing this document I found false information. Please be advised that two (2) people from your office visited me at my home on last month; they came without appointment requesting information that I had already submitted to your office.

Also be advised that Rev. Stampley will make contact with your office. I shared your letter with him as well as spoke to Mr. Jim Wilsford by telephone on Friday, July 16, 1999. Mr. Wilsford requested that Rev. Stampley call him. Rev. Stampley was as surprised as I to find that all of the allegations existed. There was a communication problem with Rev. Stampley and me a few months after the program began, but Rev. Stampley gave me authority to host the Church-Based Tutorial Program. He signed the W-2 and supplied the Tax I.D. number as well as signed the contract/*application*.

Mrs. Brown from the Church-Based Tutorial office requested that I provide her with other addresses when a check was lost. I was a member as well as secretary of the Board of Trustees for ~~St~~ekinah Glory COGIC. Rev. Stampley gave me full authority to handle the tutorial program, therefore; I felt it was not a problem to write a letter to the Church-Based Tutorial office letting them know I had a check lost. I signed the letter coming from me and placed my pastor's name under my name. This was to indicate he was pastor and not forging his signature

All matching forms, rosters and time records were forwarded to your church-based tutorial office. Rev. Stampley just did not understand the full aspects of the program. He committed to me that he would be contacting Mr. Wilsford after I shared the most recent letter with him from your office. I just don't think he knew exactly what I had to do, as a coordinator. He stated to me he would get this matter cleared up. Rev. Stampley was informed that this is a serious matter and you must hear from him as soon as possible.

The two people that came to my home and requested forms that had already been submitted; therefore I had to search for copies, some of which I did not find. I never admitted to signing Rev. Stampley's name, however, I did sign my name and write his name under mine simply indicating that he is pastor. One of the deacons, Elder Marcus Cyriak went with me and will witness that permission was given by Rev. Stampley for the church-based program.

Mrs. Brown from the state office contacted me after the final check was lost requesting another tax form. I contacted Rev. Stampley and he sent the tax number by Deacon Cyriak. He gave me permission to send the form in so Mrs. Brown could try to locate the check.

After all of this, Mrs. Brown informed me that the check had been sent back several times. During this time Rev. Stampley and I had a disagreement and I left his church. This is

Sylvia Morrow
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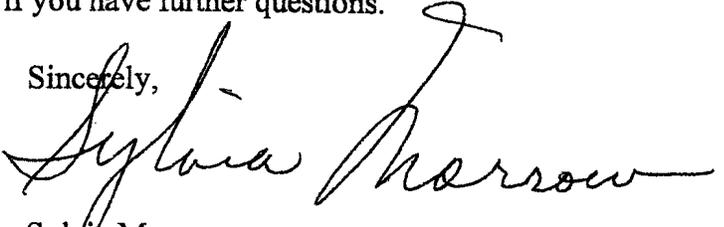
when he told your office he did not know anything about the program. Certainly I could not run a program without his permission. This is when your office starting contacting me. I told Rev. Stampley that I did not want to continue the program; I contacted Mrs. Brown informing her of same. The program was not terminated by your office first. This program is good for the child of our community, but at the time there were some problems between Rev. Stampley and me.

Please be advised that I have never broken the law. Rev. Stampley committed to contacting your office so this matter can be cleared up. He just didn't understand all aspects of the program, this is what he told me.

In closing, I hope that Rev. Stampley can clear up this matter. I am a Christian and profession person. It was my goal to provide a program that would be an asset to our community for boys and girls.

A copy of this letter is being faxed to you as well as a certified copy of same being mailed. Please contact me at 318-352-6129 if you have further questions.

Sincerely,



Sylvia Morrow

SM:efy