Las Vegas SENTINEL, Nov. 12, 1981

I am Reverend G.

N.W. Regional Vice

President of the National

Black Pastors' Con-

ference. I arrived in this

city, along with my in-

vestigative aide, two

days ago to meet with

local officials and the

Black Ministers Alliance

for Las Vegas to finish

laying the groundwork

for the inquiry into the

reasons behind the

economic conditions of

the Westside community

being in a state of

deprivation while the

rest of the city is economically flourishin-

g, both visually as well as actually. The stark

contrast that exists bet-

ween the plush and

palatial conditions of

this city and that of a totally neglected town

within-a-town (so to speak) leaves this ob-

jective observer-seeking

some answers. On

November 5, I met with

the Black Ministers

Alliance in a conference

attended by State

Senator Joe Neal.

Senator Neal's concern

for the economic

development of the

black community in Las

Vegas, was, in a very

pronounced manner.

consistent with his ac-

tion demonstrated over

the past ten years in

public office. The depth

of this concern actually

set the temp and tone for

our meeting which

Christopher,

James

Ministers Seek Assemblymen's Defeat **SNEDC DEMISE BLAMED ON BLACK ELECTED** OFFICIALS

Local and national dismissed representatives of the National Black Pastors Conference called, last Friday, for the election defeat of the two black elected assemblymen, Marion Bennett and Lonie Chaney, both Las Vegas Democrats.

Rev. G. James Christopher, Northwest Regional Vice President of the Conference said at a press conference that "conspiracy on the part of local, state, and federal officials has

the allegations.

In March 1981, the government federal reneged on a\$4.3 million grant set aside in 1980 for economic development in West Las Vegas. Funds from the **Economic Development** Administration were put on fireeze by President Reagan. They were earmarked for the Southern Nevada Economic Development Council headed by Otis Harris. In May, the federal

criticized state and local officials for the lack of development in West Las Vegas.

The Ministers Conference has set a mass rally on Friday, Nov. 13 at the True Love Missionary Baptist Church. Rev. Christopher will be the guest speaker.

Bennett said the pastors "have never been involved in economic development. I'm not about to support organizations that are self-serving."



CONFERENCE ATTENDEES (L-R) Rev. I.W. Wilson, Rev. Willie Davis, Rev. G. James Christopher and Rev. Ted Coveston.

been successful in creating an illusion of wrongdoing within the program, when the truth is that the program was undermined and sabotaged by external political forces. We are going to blow the lid off this thing."

Representatives of the conference vowed to mobilize the black community" in a voting drive to oust both assemblymen.

Christopher said "these black elected officials have exercised a puppet mentality to the governor's office. They have done little to represent the poor and underprivileged of this community."

Both elected officials

government withheld more than \$500,000 of economic development funds to the private sector because of the alleged misuse of a federal grant.

Christopher said he came to Las Vegas from San Francisco to conduct "an objective investigation'' of the charges against Harris and the withholding of the federal funds." He alleged federal and state authorities combined to put SNEDC out of business.

"This man is innocent,'' said "His Christopher. character has been assassinated. I am satisfied there was no misuse of funds. He also



Chaney said Friday he's working on the newly created Task Force for Black Economics. He said his goal is to get "poor people off the backs of the taxpayers."

Chaney echoed Bennett's remarks with "I don't even know if Harris. is right or not, but I'm See NAACP, Page 14

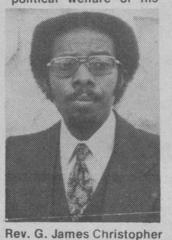
A MESSAGE FROM REV. G. JAMES CHRISTOPHER

NORTHWEST REGIONAL OFFICE, Sacramento, California NATIONAL BLACK PASTORS' CONFERENCE

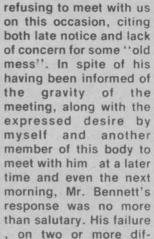
Nov. 7, 1981

lasted almost two hours in length.

Despite Senator Neal's clear concern. however, we were disturbed and now outraged by the conspicuous absence of Assemblyman Marion D. Bennett, who was also asked to attend. Not having attended a previously requested meeting called by the Alliance two weeks ago to discuss several issues pertaining to the economic, social and political welfare of his



own constituency, he further demonstrated a callous, cavalier and insensitive attitude by



ferent occasions, to respond in a responsible manner to the concern of the ministerial leaders of his own constituency, indicates to us that indeed he is part of the many pervasive problems surrounding black life in this city.

But Mr. Bennett is not alone in his disgusting and 'despicable indifference to the needs of his deprived constituency. Of like mentality is his colleague, Assemblyman Lonnie Chaney, who was also invited to attend this conference. Upon informing one of the See SNEDC, Page 13



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