

Indianapolis Church Christ
Congregational Meeting 1 Week Later
3/6/94

**International Church Of Christ Movement
A/K/A Boston Church Of Christ Movement
Audio Tape Transcription**

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Transcribed by Carol Giambalvo

Tape 1 Side 1

Ed Powers: ...that went behind all this, leading up to last Sunday night. And then I also want to talk a little bit about what happened after Sunday night. And I also, of course you know a little bit of what happened after Sun. night.

I'd also like to deal with some -- I jotted down earlier today some of the -- any time something like this happens, there are a lot of rumors that are floating around. And I jotted down some of those that I have heard and I want to throw those out. And some of those I cannot account for. I cannot really comment because I don't know where they came from. There are others that I can comment on. And there may be other questions that you have.

So, if you have questions that I do not cover in the course of talking here, then be prepared to ask those in a little bit. And we'll try to keep this moving along as fast as we can. One of the things I want to do also is I'd like to have Roger come up at some point and share about the conversation that he and I had with Marty Fuqua and with Bob Gemple on like Friday afternoon. And so I'll have him come up and share that in just a minute.

First of all, my thought processes and our thought process as a staff leading up to this. As I told you, when I came back from L.A. the last time, the day after I got back, I hurt my back and I was laid up for about a week. And I could not move around much. And after watching TV the first day, finally I started getting in the Word. And I was spending several hours a day studying. And when I did, my studies started to revive really some old convictions that I had and also brought forth some new convictions. And I began to study out these things in a much deeper way than I ever had.

Ten years ago, when I came here, I did not come from a traditional church of Christ, what you would term a traditional or mainline church of Christ. It was a very untraditional church. It was one that we were not really in the mold of a lot of other churches in that it was a very evangelistic church. And we just dreamed and kind of went for it as far as methods and so forth were concerned. But the doctrine was the same as the mainline church. We taught the same plan of salvation. And when I came out here, I had been coming to some convictions about things. And as we moved in the direction of the discipling movement, I found it necessary to really sort of stuff those convictions because they were not compatible with what was being taught in the movement at that time. And, you know, I was at a point in my life where maybe some of you have been. And, you know, you're trying to sort things out. Like I came here because I knew that I needed to learn some things and make some changes in my life and get disciplined. And at the same time, I came

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here strong in some areas. I had a strong biblical background. I have a degree in Bible from Harding University. And I had been in the ministry for 10 years before I moved here. And I had taught in Bible College and preached extensively. And I had always had a real thirst for the Bible. That was always my thing. I loved getting into the Word and studying and was very open to learning new things. And I had been doing that when I came -- I got here, I was trying to sort things out and especially after we became involved with the church in Chicago, I started trying to sort things out, trying to figure out like, okay, what are the areas that I need to change. And what are the areas that maybe needs to change in the church -- the church here. Like at the time, as some of you can attest to, was very, very legalistic, very authoritarian, as far as the leaders were concerned -- and we had a lot of fun, but some of these things were already in place in this church. So I was going through a growth process and so was the church here. And in the process, some of those convictions that I had just really got stuffed until I ended up being laid up and getting into the Word and they started to be revived.

As soon as that happened, I began to share what I was learning with the people who were close around me, namely at first it was Roger and Andy and Ryan. And a little later on, Greg. And then we weren't really talking to the campus guys that are out there that much because they wouldn't happen to be there when we were talking about it. And they were a little behind, but we started out just, I started out just sharing -- and I wasn't really going anywhere with this at the time. I was just sharing what I was learning with them. And they began to study along the same lines and we were trying to study and coming to convictions together. And after we came to convictions about these things, we began to realize that we had a problem. And the problem was how do we handle this in terms of really being honest, being true to our convictions, being true to what we were learning from God's Word and yet realizing that possibly some of these things might conflict with the doctrine that is in place in the movement. And we realized that there was a potential problem there. So we considered several options: The first was to just start sharing these things with the church in messages and so forth, and as we learn, we'll share what we're learning with the church. Of course, when I thought about that, I quickly realized that if we just began to do that, it wouldn't be long until there would be conflict and there would be suspicions aroused because some people in the church would undoubtedly say "what is this? This is not what the movement teaches." And we thought about that and we said that's not the way to go about it.

And so the next thought that I had, quite frankly, was I had come to personal convictions by this time that I was not going to spend the rest of my life just not teaching the things I was learning from the Bible. And I didn't feel good about that, guys. And that was a personal conviction. I said, "I cannot spend the rest of my life learning things and having convictions about things and yet not feeling free to share those things.

And so in trying to figure out what to do, my next option was I thought well maybe what I need to do is just simply resign. And just step aside. And I thought about that and I thought that would really be the easiest thing to do. It would have been far easier than what I have done. Okay? And what we have gone through. But the problem with that, folks, and I want you to really try to understand this because I'm trying to share my heart with you and my thought processes. The problem with that is that I knew and our staff knew that there were many, many people in this church who shared those same convictions. Because you had talked with your people and many of you had talked with me. And we knew that there were a whole lot of you who shared those convictions. In light of that, when I thought I would just resign, then my thinking was if I resign, then what is going to happen is somebody is going to be brought in here who is going to take the church in a different direction -- in a direction that, quite frankly, in my opinion that many of you would not have done well. Going in that direction may not have survived spiritually because

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your convictions being what they are. So, in light of that, I ruled out that option.

The next thing I thought of is the possibility of just -- look, let me just go and just lay all these things out to the people who are over me, to the people who disciple me -- namely I thought about just going straight to Marty Fuqua in L.A. And I thought I would just go and lay these things out to him and tell him how I am feeling about those things. And the problem I had with that was, frankly, that I have known other people within the movement who have had these same convictions and who have done that very thing. Have simply gone and laid out their convictions, even some have put it in writing and gone to the leaders and said, "look, this is what we believe." And those people, you know, were warned "do not talk to anybody about this." And then within a period of just a few days after attempts at straightening them out failed, then they were simply fired immediately. And then they never really got a chance -- I know one man in particular who was a friend of mine years ago, a man who preached in the church here years ago -- Ron Gholsten -- perhaps some of you remember him -- a little short guy with a great big voice and he preaches a long time, even longer than me. And Ron, years ago he was a leader in the Boston Church. And he had some of these same convictions that I now have. And he went to the leaders with those convictions and he just laid them out and he had brought with him around 30 people when he had moved to Boston from Florida. He had brought 30 of his people from the congregation where he was working. And these people were his best friends. And they worked side by side with him. And, obviously, they thought enough of him to follow him to Boston. And they formed a group there in one area of the city which he led. So he was really leading his own people that he brought with him from the church that he had been in previously. And when he went and laid out his convictions, he was fired. And really had much the same experience I have had this past week. It was a very painful experience. The people that were his closest friends there in that group, none of them have called him or contacted him to this day. And we had the same experience -- Bobbi and I had the same experience this week. Out of all of our friends in the movement over the last 10 years -- friends in other places and other churches, the other Midwest evangelists, the people that we disciplined in Chicago, the people who disciplined us, the other staff people in Chicago that we were so close to -- and we had numerous and many, many relationships. And the only people who contacted me were Roger Lamb and John Mantle. Those two gave me a call to find out what was going on. And then later Nick Young called me. We have been friends for a long time. And I had called him first, he didn't know anything about it and I told him about it. And then later, when he got back in town, he called me back to check. But other than those, what happened was the word was put out for no one to talk to Bobbi and me. This was even before that we were marked and disfellowshipped. And the word was put out "do not talk to Ed and Bobbi." And so friends of ours, friends that we considered very dear, have not spoken to us since. Knowing that this is the way that things are handled, I feared that if I did not share my convictions with you and, of course having in mind the many of you who I know share these same convictions, fearing that I wouldn't get that opportunity, I made the decision -- we really made the decision as a staff -- I mean it was not one that I made. In fact I told every staff person, "look if there is anybody that doesn't feel like we're doing the right thing here, then you have veto power. I mean, I'm not going to do it if any one of you feels like we're doing the wrong thing, you say so and then I will just resign. I'll feel good about resigning in those circumstances. But if we all agree that we're doing the right thing, then what we need to do is go before the church and, number one, make it clear up front that we have no desire to be separated or divided from the discipling movement. And this was a very key element in this because I think this is the thing, guys, that really separates what we have done from what maybe others have done in the past. And I think it's the thing that turns it from something bad into something good. Because we never, at any point, did we have the desire to say to the movement "you need to change, you need to be like this, we don't agree with you, if you don't change these things, then we're out." We didn't call upon them to change anything.

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We simply asked them to give us the right to practice our convictions in a spirit of unity and cooperation, which of course, was the basis on which this relationship with the movement began back in 1988. This relationship began on the basis of cooperation and relationship with one another. And, of course, since then, it has turned into something different than that. And that was the root of many of our concerns.

There are, you know, I guess probably one of the complaints that has been made most has been that you handled this in the wrong way. And I'll grant you that is a judgment call. And you are certainly free to have the opinion that this was handled in the wrong way. I respect your right to have that opinion. I talked to somebody today and he was saying, well you should have done this and you should have done that. I said, "Hey, that is easy now because the game is over. You can look back and say you should have ran on third down instead of passing after the game is over. But we were in it and that is why I am trying to share with you the thought process, because I want you to know that we were thinking through everything and we were trying to handle this in a righteous manner. Obviously, we did want to be able to make our case to you and then, as a unified church, which by the way we were last Sunday night. Last Sun. night all these other chairs were full and everybody was unified. (that's right) The division that has taken place, the families that have been divided, have taken place, in my opinion, not because that had to take place. Even if we didn't handle this in the right way, I still don't think that would have had to have taken place if there would have been a different response. If someone would have said, "look, you didn't handle this right and we're upset that you didn't handle this right, but, look, let's get this work out. Let's sit down and deal with the issues and let's see if we can get this worked out." But that's not what happened.

As soon as this -- what happened is when I left the meeting here last Sunday night and people -- guys, last Sunday night in here there was a spirit and a unity and excitement that I haven't seen in a church here in probably 8 or 10 years. I mean it was just incredible. And there were people back there, back then, who were solid as a rock and who agree and still agree with these principles. And if we had been able to just stay together as a church and not do what others have done and say "we're against the movement." We believe, and I think we made it clear that there are some things going on in the movement that we feel are not good. And I don't feel it is divisive to say that. I think that's just analytical to say that there are some things that are not good. But that, in itself, does not mean that we want to have division. It does not mean that we want to break away. The division has occurred as a result of people not being willing to allow us to have certain disagreements with their system, even though we teach the same plan of salvation, even though we are on the same wave length, you know, in most areas. But they did not want to give us the right to do these things, even though these things in many cases are matters of opinion. Of course, some of them are doctrinal issues. And the Bible says that even when it comes to doctrinal issues, that there is room for disagreement in the kingdom of God. That's what Romans 14 and 15 is all about. That you can have a different opinion on doctrinal issues and you can both be approved by God. You can both be right with God. You can both work for God. You can both have the same goals. And that was our desire. And that was my thought process.

And there has been a lot of speculation about what my thought process was. Some of that speculation has included the accusation that I was systematically getting rid of some staff people so that I could do this coupe de tat here in the church. The accusation has been made that I got rid of Spicers (?), that I got rid of Todd and Patti Assad. The truth was that Spicers came to us and expressed that they felt the need to get out of the ministry. And we did not even initiate that at all. They came to us. And they will tell you that, I think, if you ask them. Beg pardon?

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Woman: They told me.

They told you, good. So we didn't move them out. I did concur with them at that time that it might be a good thing for them to do because I knew that they were feeling a lot of frustration. The other accusation is we moved Todd and Patti Assad. That we moved them out to get them out of the way so we could do this. And though I will admit that the timing looks suspicious because they did not move that long ago, the truth is that when they moved, there was no thought of this taking place. This was a rather quick thing that happened. I have had problems and misgivings about certain things in the movement for years. And that has been no secret. That is one of the things that has been thought of, too. "You know, Ed has problems with the movement for years." Well, of course, I have. And, of course, I have been open about those things over the years. And that has been no secret. I think I have been more open about those things than probably anyone else. I think most of the leaders in the Midwest would tell you that. They would probably say, "he's on the verge of irritation over the last several years because he keeps being bothered by things." But I was trying over the years to be open. And I would voice my disapproval about whatever I thought was wrong based on the scriptures, but then I didn't deliver ultimatums and I would say I'm going to still try to get behind this and keep working. But there was no thought of this at the time that Todd and Patti moved. Todd and Patti have wanted to move to Chicago for a long, long time. For the simple reason, and he told me this, that he felt like the people who were in the ministry in Chicago had a better opportunity to advance and maybe go out and lead their own churches than somebody in Indianapolis or one of the other Midwest ministries. And so he wanted to go to Chicago for a long time.

So what happened, Chicago -- somebody in Chicago, one of the Sector Leaders up there needed a couple to be in their ministry. And they called and asked about Todd and Patti. They specifically requested Todd and Patti. And usually I fight to hang onto our staff. But knowing that Todd and Patti -- or that Todd, at least -- had wanted this for quite some time, I approached Todd about it and I told him that the decision was his. He could go or he could stay. And that is exactly what I told him. And he thought about it. We talked about it. I really didn't encourage him one way or the other. We went through the pro's and the con's and after talking through it at a restaurant downtown the night we had the big snow was the night we talked about it, and we talked it through. They went and thought about it, came back to us and said "we've made the decision that this would be a good thing to do." And so, they made the decision to move to Chicago.

Before Todd left, he was very complimentary of our relationship. He didn't have a lot of complaints about our relationship. He told me I was one of his closest friends, that he loved me, he thought we were always going to be close. We were going to stay in touch with one another. I had helped him. I had helped him so much in his life. He said all these things to me before he left. So he left on a totally great basis.

Which really brings me to another point -- something that I want to get out here and help people to understand. What has happened here since we did this and since they felt we did it in the wrong way, their response included, among other things, the telling people -- not only telling people not to talk with us, which people did not. Now Todd did call me. I want to make you aware of that and fast. Todd called me. I was on a long distance phone call when he called. I said "give me your phone number, I'll call you right back." When I got off my long distance call, I called him back and I got his answering machine and no one picked up. I assumed he had left. And we have not spoken since then. I left a message on his machine and he did not return my call, so we have not spoken. But he did try to contact me in the early stage of

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this. And I appreciated that very much.

But what happened was they told people not to talk with us. And which they did. And the other thing -- (inaudible question) when did they do that? How did they do that? I have no idea. I don't know by what means they did that but I do know that they did that. (inaudible question) Yes, I talked to the elders in Chicago. They told people we are telling you as an elder that you are not to talk to Ed Powers. So this is a fact. And I want you to understand that.

Other accusations that have been made -- one accusation is that we would not talk. That's a big one that was out there. "We want to talk but Ed does not want to talk. He won't talk." I spoke to Marty Fuqua after this meeting last Sunday night. I went to a telephone back in the office. I called him. I got his machine. I left a message to have him call me when I got home. Later on that night, he returned my call. I picked it up and we talked. I told him at that time. I told him what our convictions were, what my convictions were and our staff and the church -- the majority of the church, the vast majority who were present that night. I told him what we are feeling. I made it very, very clear to him that we did not want to leave the movement. Several of the staff people were sitting in the room when I had this conversation and heard me say that. And I didn't say it once, I said it at least two or three times. And I was very specific in what I said. I said we do not want to leave the movement. We want to give special contributions. We want to help plant churches. We want to be disciplined. We want to give people to go on the plantings. We want to give leaders as we can. In other words, essentially there was nothing per se that we had been doing that we didn't want to continue doing. It was just that we had some convictions about some things that we considered personal convictions from God that were not disunifying in themselves, did not need to be disunifying in themselves. And we wanted the right to follow these convictions because we want to make changes in our church.

And I want to make this clear, guys, we were not setting out -- our primary objective here is not to change the movement or to ask the movement to do anything or change anything. Our focus was this church, the people in this church. It was the fact that what we were seeing in this church that needed to be addressed. I wanted to get that out there to the people in the movement and hope, in the hopes that they would accept us on this basis.

I talked to Marty that night. We talked. I went through the various issues with him. The next day we talked for the second time. I went through the issues again. He said that he was going to have to talk to Kip and to the elders. And I said, "Marty, when you talk to Kip and the elders, please make sure that you communicate to them that we do not want to leave the movement. We do want to help with missions. We do want to" -- and I went through all the things we want to do. And I said that to him. (inaudible question) Was that Monday night I said that? Sunday night. And then Monday we talked and he wanted me to go over the issues with him again and we did. We talked through those issues. I shared them all with him, but he really didn't question any of them that I recall, except the first one -- the issue about authority. And he made the statement to me -- and when I told him that I did not believe from my studies of the movement in the first century was tied together in an authoritarian structure like we have in the movement tied together today -- he did disagree with that. And when he did, I asked who led the movement in the first century. And he told me that Paul led the movement. And then I pointed out to him Galatians 1 & 2 which shows that 17 years into Paul's ministry that Paul did not have a whole lot of knowledge about what was going on in the work among the Jews. Even 17 years into his ministry. For the first 3 years of his ministry, Paul did not have any contact with anyone. He did not consult anyone. And I

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pointed that out and then that conversation kind of broke down.

And the conversation, I think, was cordial. We were trying to, he was trying to understand the issues. The next day he called me. I came in and I had -- or maybe it was later on the same day. This was Monday. Later on Monday, I got a call on my answering machine and Marty said "give me a call when you get in." I called to set up a time when we could get together and talk. I called Marty when I got in. I set up a time when we could talk. But in the meantime, it had come to my attention that people -- that the plans were being made to send people into Indianapolis to begin to contact our members for the purpose of getting them to come out to a meeting where they could be addressed for the purpose of getting people out of this. And the reason for that, I do understand the reason for that. The reason for that is that the discipling movement does not believe that anyone who is not under their authority, that any group who is not under their authority is a part of the kingdom. So the fact that we were not wanting to be under the authority, even though we were willing to cooperate and have relationships and be unified in our purpose, the fact that being plugged into their system was hurting us in many cases as a church, in their minds excluded us from being in the kingdom. And I think you have got to understand their thought process. Since they believe that nobody who is not under their authority is in the kingdom, then they felt probably almost duty bound to come in here and try to rescue as many of you as they could.

How many of you received calls? Thanks. And that's not the people who are no longer here, who I am assuming most of them received calls as well. When I became aware of the plan, when I became aware that they were going to send people in to do this, I asked Marty not to do this.

Tape 1 Side 2

And of the hundreds of people I am told who were brought -- or somewhere in that neighborhood -- who were brought into Indianapolis, people were brought in who anybody who had relationships with any of us were brought in. They were working the telephones. They were setting up appointments. They were talking with people and trying to pull them out. Which obviously they would do because they believe since we are no longer under the authority of the movement, that we are lost.

So I became aware of that and asked Marty not to do it. He would not agree not to do it. I said, "Marty, we cannot talk in good faith while this is going on. I am not going to get together under these circumstances." And I want to point out here that I did not refuse to get together. I refused to get together under the circumstances. And the circumstances were that you are pulling our members. And as long as you are pulling our members away, then I don't believe that represents a good faith discussion. (that's right) If you stop pulling our members away, then we have a good faith discussion where we can both have the confidence that we can maybe sit down and work some things out.

I have used this illustration: if a man came into my house and laid all my family down on the floor and began to shoot them one at a time and while he was shooting them, he turned to me and said, "let's talk about this." And if I said, "Look, stop shooting my family and I'll talk." And he says "no, but I am willing to talk." And that's how I felt, guys. I felt like, "look, we're taking your members." "Stop taking my members and we'll talk." "No, I'm not going to stop taking your members, but I'll talk." Now I understand why they were taking our members. But I believe, guys, if you think this thing through, that the division here did not occur when we made the decision to follow our convictions from God's word. (that's right) I don't believe that the division occurred even if we made a mistake in how we handled this by coming to the

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church first, because that still would not have meant that we had to have division because we didn't want division.

The division occurred when the plan was placed in motion to pull our members away. That is when families were split. That is when confusion came. I have been accused of disunity. I have been disfellowshipped, marked by the discipling movement for disunity. And when Roger and I met with Bob Gemple and Marty Fuqua for 3-1/2 hours last Fri. afternoon, I reminded them on that occasion that the last time I had spoken to the church, that we did not have disunity when I got done speaking. What we had was probably the greatest unity that we have ever had. And the greatest joy and enthusiasm. We were not disunified with one another. We were not disunified with the movement after I got done speaking. (that's right)

I know that we initiated the action. And I know sometimes that when the person who initiates the action may be the person who gets blamed for causing the disunity. But if the action that is initiated is not in itself a sin or does not in itself call for or promote disunity, then even though we initiated the action, I do not believe that we caused the disunity. I believe their response to the action is what caused the disunity. That is when the disunity occurred. And I want us to be, I really want to get that point out to you, guys, because I know that it looks to people like we are disunified. I told Marty, I said "Marty, we do not want to be out of the movement." It was not more than hours later until the reports started coming back that Ed Powers had left the movement and has taken as many people with him as he can. That is the message that was coming back. And that was contrary, totally contrary to what I was saying and what I was calling for.

There was also another accusation that was circling and this was told in the church in Chicago. It was implied by one of the elders that Jerry Jones, I guess Jerry Jones was in Indianapolis the weekend that this took place. (laughter) I mean that's my luck. So it was implied that Jerry Jones and I were in cahoots here and that we were cooperating together. And I would like to clear the record on that. I have not talked to Jerry Jones for years. I have not talked with Jerry Jones since Jerry was an elder in the Boston Church. Now whether he was in town or not, I do not know. But I do know that I have not talked to him since he was an elder in the Boston church. And so I would like to lay that one to rest.

I have also been accused of lying about our stats and, in particular, I have been accused of -- I don't know whether I can say I have been accused or whether it was just strongly implied, okay? Let me just say it was strongly implied in fairness. It was strongly implied that I had misrepresented statistical information when I made the statement to the church last Sunday night that the Indianapolis church had grown more in 1993 than any other church in the Midwest. That was refuted, or an attempt made to refute that by Kip on Thursday night when he read our average attendance for each month for the year 1993. And he read these numbers: 914 was our average in Jan. Feb, 912; March 903; April 968; May 917, June 883, July 912, August 988, Sept. 961, Oct. 965, Nov. 964 and Dec. (which is always every month a low month because that is holiday season and everybody's attendance goes down in Dec. and everybody knows that) Dec. 928. So if you look at 914 in Jan and 928 in Dec. -- if you look at attendance, it would leave the impression that the church really didn't grow that much. Guys, attendance in every church goes up and down on a monthly basis. It doesn't just grow steadily like this. It goes up, then it goes down and it may go down again and then up again and up again. And the only way you get a true picture of your increase in attendance would be to average all of the numbers together and compare then with the average of all the numbers of the previous year. Now if that were done, that would have shown that our attendance average for the year increased in the neighborhood of 100. If I had thought of it, I would have added it up before I came

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tonight. But our 1993 attendance increased about 100's over 1992. However, I did not make any statement about attendance to the church last Sunday night. I said we grew more than any church in the Midwest. And they understood that we grew more.

I have here -- well, I had here -- where are they, Rich? Oh, I gave them to you. I'm going to give you a copy of this. This was passed out -- this was produced by the L.A. church of International Church of Christ West U.S., Canada, Scandinavia, Commonwealth of Independent States 1993 growth analysis. Okay? Let me give you a copy. I didn't put the front page on it. I just copied the pages of interest to you. But if you will look at this, the Midwest family, which includes the church of Champaign, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, Louisville, Milwaukee, Minneapolis and Syracuse. Now here's the point I want to make because this has some bearing, guys on this whole situation. You know, one of the statements that I made last week was that this thing, this system that we have had in place is not working in the older established churches. I made that point. When you get this sheet, what you are going to see is that in 1993 if you add up the growth of all the Midwest churches, which consist of some 4,542 disciples -- that's the total number of disciples in all of these 10 Midwest churches. 4,542 disciples had a total combined increase in 1993 of 17. And I say that because part of the reason why I wanted to make changes in this church is that I felt that the system that we were in was one that was damaging to us and to other churches. Other churches have been damaged more than us. The church in Cincinnati, I have made this point before, the church in Cincinnati ten years ago was a little larger than we are. Now we are -- we were -- about twice the size of them. We are still bigger. We are still bigger.

No, I don't want you to clap. I'm not trying to get you to clap at that. That is not anything to clap about. You see, I am trying to make the point here that I wanted to make changes in the church here. I have tried to protect the church from the legalism and authoritarianism that I feel like has been damaging. And I think to the degree that we have been successful, we have done a little better over the years than the other ministries. If you will look at that first column, the membership column, you will see that the Champaign church grew by 42 disciples in 1993. The Chicago church ended up with a -27. The Cincinnati church increased by 4. The Cleveland church, 29. Now the Cleveland church, part of that 29 represented the original team that went in. There was a planting that year. The Detroit church, another established church that has been there a few years, increased by 7. The Indianapolis church grew by 62. The Louisville church grew by -3. Milwaukee was -157 -- that was due to the fact that Chicago requested that in the neighborhood of 100 of their members move to Chicago to help out with the work there. And so, actually in reality, Chicago would have been lower and Milwaukee would not have been that low had that not taken place. But I wanted you to understand why the big number there. Minneapolis church grew by 9 and the Syracuse church grew by 51 and again, a portion of that number represents the original team that moved in because that church also was planted in 1993.

This is what I said last Sunday night. I said we grew more than any other church in the Midwest. And we did. These stats are compiled in L.A. That's not what was shared.

(inaudible question) Okay. How you get net growth -- net growth. Okay, get that microphone, we want to get the questions.

Male: The question was out of that number, do you know how many of those people who were from the Midwest that were sent to L.A. or other churches outside. Because those numbers would not -- would those numbers have been calculated in the net growth?

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Ed Powers: Those numbers are calculated into net growth. The move-ins and your move-outs are calculated into net growth. And, I mean, I don't have that information in front of me, but I can give you that information of the Indianapolis church. Last year the Indianapolis church we had moved into the church 32 and we had 31 move out. So it was within one. The year before, we had 30 more move out than moved in. Last year for us it was about a wash. Okay? The larger churches, we have people move in who get jobs. Maybe they get transferred here or whatever. And they move here for that reason. The larger churches have move-ins -- for example, the church in L.A. the last three years have sent over 200 leaders from the Chicago church to the church in LA. So the larger churches are more the recipients of the move-ins. But you get net growth by adding baptisms and restorations and move-ins and then you subtract from that number fallaways, move-outs, deaths. Those are the only three ways to get out of the kingdom. And that's the only 3 ways to get in that I know of, too. That's how we arrive at net growth.

So my point is, I made the point and I want to get this information out, guys, because there are a lot of people who are getting misinformation. I made the point that this church grew more than any other church in the Midwest. Statistics were read relative to our attendance, which at a casual glance would appear that we did not grow. An averaging of these and comparing them to the previous year would have shown that we did increase even more in attendance than we did in net growth. But I believe the impression was left, folks, that we didn't grow and, hence, the rumor is now circulating even by people -- I know I found out by one young man who left the church year and went with the other group and the reason he gave was because I lied about stats. Well, I want to get this information out that I did not lie about statistics.

Another -- some of these things, guys, I'm looking here at the things I wrote down and in all honesty, there are some of these rumors -- there is at least one here that I am looking on, the next one on the list, that I really cannot dispel without really confessing someone else's sin. Okay? And so I am not going to mention that one. I will just let it go on circulating. I was going to tell it, but I am thinking that probably I should not do that one.

The fourth one here that I wrote down, it was circulated that Bobbi and I had to be moved to Chicago back in 1988 because we were having severe marital problems. Now, Lord knows, we have had our share of problems over the years. But that was not the purpose of our moving to Chicago. Our marriage at that particular point was going as well as it had. It's hard to remember how your marriage was doing in 1988, but that was not the reason for our moving to Chicago.

The accusation has been made that I was emotionally unstable, that I have always been emotionally unstable and I guess my response to that is why did they have someone emotionally unstable leading the fastest growing church in the Midwest? (applause)

It has been told that I -- and this was an interesting one -- it's has been circulated that I hung up on John Mantle and that I hung up on Marty Fuqua. In reality, I did not hang up on John Mantle or Marty Fuqua. I did hang up on my sister. Now I don't know if you have ever hung up on your sister or not, but I did get angry at my sister and I did hang up on my sister. Okay? So I will own that. We got back in touch and I apologized for that and so on. But the way the rumors start about hanging up on John Mantle was kind of interesting. John Mantle and I were talking on the phone and at one point in the conversation, there was a lull in the conversation and neither of us was saying anything. And we have call waiting on our phone. And when there was a lull in the conversation, a call clicked in and I heard John go "huhhhhhh" and hang

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up. He thought -- he heard the click and he thought that I had hung up. And I had been given information on where he was staying. I was told that he was staying at the Courtyard Marriott, I think. And I had the number and I called it back real quick because I wanted to make sure that he knew that I did not hang up on him. And they said "we don't have anybody by that name staying here." I did not know where he was staying. I did not find out where he was staying until the next day. You say, "well, why didn't you find out?" Well, the situation was, guys, that I was getting phone calls just like this. We have 2 lines in our house and it was not uncommon to have 4 phone calls at one time. We have one we're talking to, one comes on call waiting on this line and Bobbi would be talking to someone on the other line and one on call waiting on that line. And we were just going (sounds of shooting). And there was not really time at that time to go. You have no idea. You have no idea how hectic it has been for the last several days. It wasn't the kind of thing where. I was like, well, look I'm in deep trouble already. What is a little more trouble. So I didn't get back, I didn't find out where he was and get back with him until the next day. I did call him back then the next day and explained to him what happened. However, before I was able to get back with him and explain to him what happened, I was already getting calls from Chicago coming back, being told that you hung up on John Mantle.

I mean rumors were circulating. Now I know that is a legitimate misunderstanding, okay? He thought that I hung up on him. I did not. Later on the rumor, Mantle's name got taken out and Marty's name got put in. I mean, they both start with an M, so I guess I can understand that. Rumors are going to be spread, I guess it is easy to understand how that mistake could be made. But the rumor started to circulate that I had hung up on Marty. I did not hang up on Marty or anyone else other than my sister. And I apologized to her.

It has also come to my attention, it was circulated that I cussed out John Mantle. And again, I did not cuss out John Mantle or anyone, including my sister.

Another rumor that was told and circulated, and this hurt me. This was circulated by people that I considered dear friends of mine who did not call me, who did not check this out in any way, but in an attempt to pull people away, there are people here in this audience -- at least one person that I know -- who was told that I had to, you know, that he had to get counseling one time. And it is true. About five years ago, after I went to Chicago, when I was up in Chicago going through the same kind of stuff that you were going through down here, I got distraught enough that I wanted to go and get some counseling and get help and get back on track. The counseling resulted, guys, I had never gotten -- I had made it for 38 years and had never had to get any counseling or anything in my life. The counseling came about as a result of going through the life talks and the discipleship groups back then where the people were ganging up on one person and just unmercifully, unmercifully raking them over the coals. And some people, I guess, can benefit from that. My self image at the point in my life was not such that I could benefit from that. It came close to pushing me over the edge, some of the stuff that I went through. And yes, yes, so I did go get counseling. But I guess my question would be, you know I'm not ashamed of the fact that I got counseling. A lot of people get counseling. I don't think that is something that -- I have not tried to hide that or cover that up or anything of that nature. But I guess the question is what bearing, what bearing does that have on this situation. The only bearing it has, guys, is this is what is happening. And I want you to understand this. The approach that was taken by the church in L.A. to combat this problem from their point of view was to, it appears to me, and this is my opinion, but it appears to me that the process was one of directing or focusing attention on my character verses focusing attention on issues. (that's right) I feel like, guys, that there -- I know, and I'm not saying that there have not been attempts made to address the issues. Because I know there have been. But I am saying the predominant thing that has come back to me have

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not been discussions about the issues. That is not what is going around. It is not like, the latest talk is not what do you feel about this authoritarian issue and how do you feel about the giving -- that's not what is being talked about. What is being talked about is Ed and his character.

And I just want you to imagine for a minute if every friend that you had in the last 10 years with the exception of 2 or 3, if every friend in the last 10 years suddenly totally stopped talking to you. And then if you were put in a situation where anybody who has known you for the last 10 years were to be put in a position to get up and say something that would be somewhat negative about you or to cast you in a negative light, I want to ask any one of you what could be told about you and your life in the last 10 years by virtually everyone who has known you? I mean, over the years, you have said things, you have said things in anger that you were later sorry for and repented of. Over the last 10 years you have said things that probably slipped out of your mouth that you wished you could take back. I know that has probably never happened to you, Jim, but it happens to me.

Over the years you shared things in confidence, you share your heart with people, you share how you are feeling at the time. Let me give you this illustration. Last week at probably the lowest ebb that I was, I was so hurt and beaten and angry and the phone rang. And I picked it up and I started talking to the guy on the other end and during the course of the conversation, I mean I was feeling like man, you have these moments in your life, you just feel like "man, I have had it." And I said, "I'll tell you, the way I am feeling right now, I feel like I would rather be dead than be in this movement. I may feel differently later on, but that is how I am feeling." And, of course, I did feel differently later on. I went through those stages where I was so hurt and so beaten up, I had a guy on our staff today call me and say, "Look, I feel like stepping out of the ministry because I am so tired of this. So tired of being beaten up." You have your ups and downs, guys, when you go through a process. You keep trying to bring yourself back to right thinking and you are tempted with wrong thinking. But what gets told from a situation like that? It's not, "well, he had a moment when he was very distraught and he said this but he also said I may feel differently later." No, that's not what was told. It was, "I heard him say that he'd rather be dead than be in this movement."

What I am saying is, guys, that does not, in fairness, leave a proper impression of this whole process that I was going through. I mean, you can imagine what I was going through. And I was not perfect. But I'll tell you what. I am being totally, totally honest with you tonight. I am laying it totally out. I mean, I didn't have to tell you that I hung up on my sister. I didn't have to tell you that I got counseling. I am being honest with you and trying to help you see that a lot of this stuff that is being said are either half truths or total lies or taken out of context or misunderstandings as in I hung up on John Mantle. Half truths are being told. He won't talk. That's only half the truth. The other half is under the circumstances. I lied about stats, that impression was left. That has been dispelled. You are going to have to take my word on the marital problem thing. Getting rid of ... I mean all these things I want you to see and I want you to understand how things transpire when a situation like this comes about.

I would like to have Roger come up right now and I would like to just have Roger share with you briefly the conversation that he and I had with Marty Fuqua and Bob Gemple on Saturday afternoon. Or Friday afternoon.

I'm really grateful that I have the opportunity because I feel like I have had the privilege to really know the truth. And I want you guys to know the truth. And that is what the Bible says the church is built on. And that is what we talked about today. The truth will set you free.

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I had the privilege of being involved in this whole process. I wanted to back up just a bit and I hope Ed will let me do that, but I was there when Ed was sharing these convictions that he had come to. And we, as a staff, talked about them. And I know that I took a day of praying and fasting and studying over the scriptures to really come to a conviction about what I believed was true and what I believe was best for this congregation. Did I know that these decisions might have repercussions? Yes, I did. But I believe that if we communicated to Los Angeles and Chicago that we wanted to continue to be in the movement, that we wanted to continue to cooperate in every way, I believed that we would talk. And I was prepared to sit down with Marty Fuqua and Kip McKean and anyone to talk. And so I felt good about the decision to bring these things to the congregation last Sunday night.

Then I had the privilege to be in the -- I went back with Ed when he called and left a message on Marty's machine. I was a witness to that. And he just said, "Marty it is very important that we talk tonight. Call me back at my home." And Jane and I drove over to Ed and Bobbi's house because we just wanted to be there. I knew this was important for this church. And so, I followed over there and we sat in Ed's office and soon enough, the ring came in and it was Marty and Ed picked it up. And Jane and I and Andy and Leslie and several others were in the room at that time, listening to the conversation. And I heard Ed lay out the four principles there with Marty -- what happened at the congregation meeting. And I heard Ed say two or three times "we do not want to leave the movement. We want to continue to cooperate. We want to continue to be dicipled by Chicago, attend the seminars, give special contribution. We just want to observe and obey these principles from God's word."

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Tape 2 Side 1

I left that night feeling real excited. We had communicated. We communicated the congregational decision. And I believed the conversation was going to begin. Went to (?) and picked up my kids, came back the next day. By 11:30 that morning on Monday I had already talked to someone from Cincinnati who said that we had voted as a congregation to leave the movement. I was shocked. Because I had been present at the meeting. I had been present on the phone conversation. And then to hear false reports returning was very disappointing to me.

I then continued to get phone calls like all of you. One day we got 62 messages on our answering machine. In spite of the calls that we did pick up. And I know many of you had the same experience. It was unbelievable. I have still not been able to return all the calls. It's not that I don't want to. I just can't get back to all the people.

So, I really wanted -- at that time my sister from Cincinnati called, expressed as many of you got calls that she feared I was going to be lost and I was going to go to Hell. And I said, you know, that's not the way it was. And so, I wrote a letter to John Mantle, expressing that I was willing to communicate and she handed it to him personally. He did call me back this afternoon. I got notice of that. But the thing that I really wanted, my sister appealed to me and I know many of you have had in your heart, I know that I love this church. As I know that we all do. And I want very much for this church to be unified. (yes) And I kept thinking about Ephesians 4:1-3 "make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit to the bond of peace." And I wanted as a person who had been involved in this decision making and I had been there present at the meeting, I had been there present during the phone conversation, I wanted to try to clear this mess up. Everything I could do. At the same time, I wanted to try to do it through the proper channels because I felt that there had been a breakdown from what I heard Marty communicate -- I mean Ed communicate to Marty -- and then what came back. And so I called Ed on Friday morning, after all these phone calls and said, "Ed, I would like to get involved in talking to Marty." And Ed said, "I've already got it set up." I said, "Can I come?" And he said, "yes." So we got together Friday afternoon at 3:00. It was...Ed initiated that meeting. Ed initiated it.

Now I'm going to share a little bit more about some other things that I have verified from my talk with Marty. But in that meeting, it was Marty Fuqua who leads the L.A. church or Associate Evangelist and leads the Western Sector; Bob Gemple who oversees HOPE and is one of the World Sector Leaders, myself, Ed and Ed's dad, Dave Powers were all present there at that meeting. I prayed all afternoon. I prayed not afternoon, but I prayed a lot of the afternoon, praying for that meeting. And I love this church. And, boy, you hear accusations being thrown that you have been just divisive and like many of you, I have by nature an accused conscience and I wanted to make sure if I have done anything wrong. I have a clear conscience, but you know, if I have messed up unknowingly. And so I prayed, "God, show me the truth." And I said, "God make it overwhelmingly obvious." So my time with Marty and Bob, as I sit there and I wrote out twelve questions that I wanted answers for. I didn't get to ask all those questions, but I think I got to ask the most important questions. I also took the afternoon and I read through some of Kip's document, "Revolution Through Restoration" that was printed in Upside Down Magazine in 1992 because I wanted to see what is the real issue here. I also read over my notes, went through the book of Acts, looking at how churches cooperated together. I really went into that meeting prepared that I wanted to know the truth.

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Ed and I prayed and Dave prayed before the meeting, prayed for humility, prayed for wisdom and prayed that we would be gentle. And I can report that the meeting was very cordial. There was not tempers. There was no outbursts of anger. There was a very -- in fact as I came in the house -- it was in Ed's house, there were hugs. It was a warm meeting, greeting each other.

Bob Gemple began the discussion, the conversation. And Marty actually was really quiet. I don't think he spoke for about the first 45 minutes - 1 hour. Besides just the initial greeting. And Bob -- and I really appreciate our feeling, Bob Gemple was really seeking to be a peace-maker, trying to really bring what had become two sides, together. And I appreciate that. (amen) And he started out and he started talking about the thought process of how Ed came to the decision to bring these things to the congregation. And Ed shared with him what he shared with you tonight. Okay, I don't think I need to rehash that. Just how he shared how he came to the thought process, the study, bring it to the staff and bring it to the congregation.

Then they began to ask, and I don't know if I have got this exactly chronological, okay? But I'll do my best. And I've got some notes jotted down and I've shared this with many other people. Is then, I think at that point they asked why Ed had not thought to bring it to the L.A. church leadership, the Chicago church leadership before bringing it to the congregation. And Ed shared with them what he shared with you tonight, that his options as he saw them was to resign or to sneak up on the congregation and begin teaching this without really letting the congregation know what his convictions were or to bring it before the congregation like he did on last Sunday night, or if he brought it to the attention of the leadership the fear was that he would be fired and never have an opportunity to share it.

I spoke up and I said that I, too, felt like as a staff member had to come to a judgment and I really believe from my experiences in this movement, from the experiences that I had from knowing that this was going to possibly be controversial, that I believed, too, that there was a great possibility and probability that Ed would be fired as well. I said I did not know that but I had to make a judgment. And I told them at that point in light of the response from churches outside Indianapolis this week, in light of the swift and very dramatic action, I said, I believe -- let's say that my judgment was wrong. But I said I believe that based on the reaction, that I believe that it was right. (that's right) So there was a fear there and I believe that fear has been confirmed. (that's right) And I told Marty at that point, I think I said this 2 or 3 times that evening, I said I was very disillusioned with the reaction of the Int'l Church of Christ leadership. (that's right)

I also -- at that point, they began to ask Ed about his relationships that he had within the movement. And Ed shared about the four relationships he had with Roger Lamb, Marty Fuqua, Bruce Williams and Ron Drabot. If I could go ahead and go through the whole thing, that would help me. I'm trying to keep my thoughts and then I'll answer the questions you have. I'd appreciate that. But what they began to do is they began to ask Ed about his relationship with Ron Drabot and Ed said "I feel like it's strained now because of some of comments that have been made in Chicago this week. But before that I liked Ron and considered him a friend."

Then they asked him about -- Bob asked him about his relationship with Marty. And Ed said "I really have always loved Marty. I like Marty and I always loved him. I felt like he has always loved me." And then Bob said, "well, the truth is, Ed, your relationship with Ron has been terrible and your relationship with Marty has not been much better." That didn't make sense to me because why would Marty, overseeing the Sector, have had Ed move here to lead this church if the relationship had not been good.

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(that's right) But, it also became obvious to me as I was sitting over at the side, they were not dealing with the principles at hand here. (that's right) We're talking about Ed's relationships -- that's a very subjective comment coming from Bob Gemple, evaluating the relationships. So, I thought that was strange.

Then they asked Ed why -- I forget how this came out -- Ed shared that one thing that he felt in all his relationships in the movement that there was a certain structure in this movement whether there is a hierarchial structure **that in the relationships when being disciplined, that when there was a difference of viewing things, when there was a difference of opinion or difference of doctrine, that the way it was settled was by the person that was being disciplined by the other person basically yielding and they way they would come to unity was if you just said, "well, okay, I'll go with your plan."** And Ed shared there was one exception to that was when he was in Chicago and Marty Fuqua had come to the staff and said let's raise the budget by having everybody in the church give \$5 more a week. And Ed went to Marty and said, "Marty, I don't think that's biblical because that's not fair to cross the board." And so Marty changed the policy and said "Okay, we won't do that." So Ed recognized that as one exception. But he said that the truth was also that later, Marty, you went ahead and did it anyway. Okay?

So that was what we talked about then. Then, also I forgot to mention that when we talked about, when I shared that I was disillusioned with the way the leaders of the Int'l CoC had reacted to what we had requested, Bob Gemple said "well, that's because there was a breakdown in conversation and that Ed was not willing to continue to talk." And Ed asked Marty "what did I say to you?" And Marty said, "you said that at this point you didn't see any reason to continue to talk." And Ed said, "was there anything else I said?" And Marty just kind of sat there and then Ed said, "I also said while you are actively stealing members away from the present leadership of this church, I don't believe that there is any reason to continue to talk." Marty did not refute that. I think that's important. That was important to me, because that has been one of the reports. Marty did not refute that at all. Therefore, I believe that he was acknowledging that was true.

Then I raised a question because the charge of divisiveness. And I read -- and I actually wish we had copies of this, but I read from the "Revolution Through Restoration" that was printed in Upside Down Magazine in 1992 where Kip wrote "when we built these churches, we taught against the unscriptural church government system practiced in the traditional churches of Christ. They believe that each congregation was independent and totally autonomous from all the others. We showed from the Bible how congregations were connected through the relationships and how evangelists directed other evangelists in the region (field) they influenced. (The word "autonomy" is not even in the Bible.) We also taught that the lead evangelist worked with and for the most part, led and disciplined the elders to direct the affairs of the local church (Titus 1:5; I Tim. 5:17). In all, we preached one worldwide brotherhood (1 Peter 2:17) for we observed that independent autonomy violated the command and spirit of Scripture." I read this to them. And I shared with them at that time -- and I've looked up these verses also and it still didn't explain this paragraph. And so I said, "this is something that I see as a very basic structure of the Int'l CoC. This is a very basic teaching. Thus we have Kip McKean and then we have the world sector leaders under him and then under them are the churches throughout this movement." And I said, "now, I grew up in the traditional church of Christ and so when you use the word "autonomy"" -- and we all heard that word this week --" but when you hear the word autonomy and if you are communicating with that in that independence..." And I said this to them, okay? This is what I said, I said "if you are communicating independence, I agree that is not in the spirit of the New Testament, to have the attitude saying, 'listen, this is our church, we don't want any input or anybody outside this church. We're going to do it the way we

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want to do it. We don't want any direction or influence.' That is not the spirit of the New Testament. I agree with that. But if you are talking about freedom, then I have never seen in the N.T. where freedom of the local congregation to do what is best for that church -- I've never seen shown to me in the Bible that's not there." And I opened my Bible to a passage that Ed shared in the congregational meeting last Sunday in 1 Cor. 16:12 "now about our brother, Apollos, I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity." I shared that it was obvious to me that Paul, as an apostle, strongly urged Apollos, but yet Apollos felt, and therefore had the freedom to say no at this point, he was quite unwilling. I said, "that's all we have requested. That's all we have asked. I have heard Ed say to Marty that we want to be apart. We simply said we want to be able to say at times we are quite unwilling to do this at this time because it is not best for this congregation. And I shared with them that. I said, "I don't believe that God would have recorded that in the scripture if that wasn't an okay attitude to have." And I asked that.

And then I said, "can you show me from the Bible where this paragraph of the structure of this movement - - can you show me where there is a biblical model for this?" And at that point they said, "well, you know, you guys have been in this movement for some time. You've not had a problem with this before." I've been a part of this movement for 7-1/2 yrs. Jane and I moved to Chicago in 1986. You know, Ed was being discipled by Roger Lamb here, but when he moved to Chicago in 1988. They said "why have you not had a problem with this before?" And Ed said, "well I was leading this church when I came into this movement." They said, "Ed, you've been placed to lead a church in this movement. You knew this was the structure."

"But I was leading this church before it became a part of this movement." (Ed)

And I shared with them at that time, I said, "I have seen this change. When I moved to Chicago in 1986 and when I even moved here in 1988, I would tell people that we are a movement of churches that are linked together by relationships." I stated that after moving here. I have taught that. Some of you maybe heard me say that because I really believed that. But I shared with them that I have seen it change. I have felt it change. I shared with them how we moved here. I said I was excited to move to Indiana because I'm from Indiana originally. I was excited about planting churches throughout Indiana. I said when we first moved here, we started dreaming about planting churches all over the state. Some of you remember that.

But I said then we were told that, you know, we really needed to put those dreams aside and help plant the bigger cities. I said that made sense to me, okay. The big cities need to be evangelized. I said, when we first moved here, all we reported to Chicago every month, at the end of the month, was how many baptisms we had. That was in 1988. I said, that's fine, we can report how things are going. I said, then it went to net growth and I said I understood that because we don't want to get faked out because we had a lot of baptisms and we had a lot of fallaways. So I understood that. But now it's gotten to the point where every week we report what the attendance per zone, by this church, to Chicago. And I said that way I have to keep track of visitors and visitors' kids and members' kids and members. What does that mean to Joe Bible Talk Leader to go to him and say "how many kids do those visitors have?"

And Bob Gemple admitted that all this was a problem in the structure. And I said, "well, all we have requested is that we are quite unwilling to do that because we feel that's not best for this church." So then I came back to this question. I said, "can you show me the biblical model for this?" Because in my mind -- I didn't share this with them -- but in my mind before the meeting, I had not ever had the intent or heart of

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being divisive. I love this church. I love this movement. And I believed that this movement was the hope of evangelizing the world that I wanted to be a part of. But I also knew that there were some practices that were hurting people. And I had come to the conviction that they were unbiblical and that they were hurting people, so I have wanted simply the freedom as a staff member to say that at this time we are quite unwilling, as Apollos said to Paul, to do this. And so, as I thought through this, I thought if I can see where there is a biblical model for this, where one evangelist is over another evangelist and that truly in God's word this structure that we have in this movement is biblical, then I thought maybe then I'll need to evaluate it somehow that I've done something divisive.

So I really pressed this point. And I asked again, **"can you show me the biblical model for this?" And I don't remember if both of them said it, but I know that one said it and the other affirmed it. They said and I quote, "there is no biblical model for this." To me that was very significant. (that's right) Because, you see, we have been called divisive because we have spoken out against a structure that there is no biblical model for in the scriptures.**

So then, we got started talking about relationships and Bob Gemple said, and I quote, "authority is inherent in relationships." And Ed and I both said we don't agree with that. We believe that we can have relationships in the church without one person having authority over the other person. (that's right) They never backed off of that stand when we said we disagree. In fact, the illustration was used -- they asked, "you believe this, Ed -- Roger is a member of your staff. If Roger just didn't show up at the staff meeting, you'd have authority." And Ed said, "well, I wouldn't mark him. And I wouldn't withdraw fellowship from him." Okay?

And they said, "but, Ed, you know..." they were trying to press this point. And I spoke up and said, "I believe from working with Ed for three years, I believe that if I had 105 temperature, he'd say stay home. I believe if I didn't show up for some good reason, he would come talk to me. Because that's the kind of relationship that we have worked with." And so then I said to them, "can you show me in scriptures where authority is inherent in relationships?"

And Marty said, "Roger, I don't need to show you a scripture because in any organization, there is authority." Now I wish I would have thought -- Jane and I were talking about this later -- I wish I would have asked the question, "but, Marty, I've always been told the church is an organism, not an organization." I think it is significant, at the same time very disappointing. I don't say this to be critical. I just say this is the truth. It is significant that for 3-1/2 hrs. we sat down with two World Sector Leaders and I opened my Bible, that I asked them to show me things in the scriptures and they never opened their Bible once. I was disappointed. I was disappointed.

I shared with them that I was disillusioned with the leadership and the response of leadership this week. Then Bob Gemple at that point really began to make a point of good faith that he felt like it would be a sign of good faith if Marty was allowed to preach this Sunday to the entire church. And Ed said, "no. Not while you are still actively trying to steal members away from the present leadership."

At that point, I spoke up and I said, "I have to be honest. Marty, I love your preaching. You are one of my favorite preachers. But I have fear that at this point, Marty, you will stand up in front of the entire church and say that Ed has been divisive. I have that fear. Could we put that on hold and we can continue to talk and work toward unity, to continue to study these things out. Marty, I will personally pay to fly you back

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here so you can preach to the church at a later time."

I forgot to mention this. Marty said, "do you mean, Ed, you're not going to let me preach at your church?" And Ed said, "Marty, I have had you preach at this church before." I think it was last summer or the summer before Marty preached. He said, "it's just that while you are in this process of trying to take members away from the church." Then Dave Powers, who used great self control and did not say much during the meeting -- because I feel like he had some things to share, but he let it be between us -- at that point he said, "Marty, maybe it would help these guys if they knew what you were going to preach about." Okay? And Marty at that time said, "well, I don't know. I've not thought about it. It was Bob's proposal." Now to me that was very significant. I felt at that time that it was never really Marty's intentions to preach to the entire church because I felt like it was even said -- it was only Bob's proposal.

Question: Roger, I've seen both sides, okay? I'm here because I love you....

Okay, let me share this, if I could.

Another voice (Stan): I've got good news to share. I think we're a lot more closer, the things that unite us are much more numerous than the things that divide us. Okay? I think that -- "the movement" -- the movement, well the brotherhood of believers we put ourselves with, right? We still have fellowship with them? Do we still have fellowship? Okay. They still have fellowship with us. You have not been disfellowshipped. Ed has not been disfellowshipped. That's not what I heard. You've been marked. There is a difference. It means you have been warned.

Excuse me, could I continue sharing this.

Other voice (Stan): I'm sorry. What was the last point you just made?

Ed Powers: Let me share something. And this was stated at the meeting, Stan. I have been marked and people have been instructed not to talk with me. Now I mean, I don't know what -- does that mean they can write me letters? Or...

Stan: Yes. I was encouraged to do so. I'm talking with you now and I was encouraged to do so. I'm here, encouraged to talk to you.

Ed Powers: Well, in the meeting with Bob Gemple and Marty Fuqua, we were told -- my father was there, Roger was there -- that we had been marked. They did say you have not been disfellowshipped, but they said you have been marked and we have told people not to talk to you. I don't know the difference. I was not told that by John Mantle this morning.

Stan: I've been there at the church, my wife was down there. We pulled this thing together. Give up. It's going to come out.

Ed Powers: Listen, here's my point. This is what we were told. And I'm just making the point that I don't know the difference between people not being allowed to talk with me and being disfellowshipped. That seems to be one in the same to me.

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Woman: ...absolutely not correct. I think we were instructed tonot to speak to any member of the staff unless they routed it through John or another source. We were specifically instructed to talk to John Mantle first before talking to any staff member.

Stan: I did that. I routed through John Mantle. (laughter)

Roger: If I could continue this conversation. Well, I just want to share the rest of the conversation, if I could. And if you have any questions... What the point is the passage that kept going through my mind and I feel like that maybe some of these questions by the statements -- maybe not some of you, but I feel like some of the questions maybe my motive here has been questioned, but what I am sharing is what scripture kept going through my mind during the meeting is Eph. 4:1-3 "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit." I want you to know I love this church. I want this church to be united. Lines have been drawn. I do not believe that I have drawn them. That's the point. And that's what I want you to understand. That I have not drawn those lines. And I want to share with you that I sought to seek unity.

I asked Marty, I said "I will fly you back, just give us more time to deal with these issues, these principles in scripture." He said, "well, we'll need to talk to Kip." And then Marty asked would Ed and I be willing to fly to L.A. to meet with Kip. And Ed said he didn't feel comfortable at this time because in process, they're still trying to divide this membership away from the present leadership. At that point I said I would personally pay to fly Kip here so we can study this out and come to unity.

What I want you to understand that I have a clear conscience. I have made every attempt to seek unity. I have made every attempt to have unity. I continue to want to have unity. But I believe that they have continued with their plan to start a new congregation. (that's right) I think that's obvious. From the point that we establish that they agree that there is no biblical model for this structure, which is what we mean is simply the structure that we have been in this movement is not based on a biblical model. As far as I remember, they did not use the word "divisive" again. They used the words that it would have been the decent thing to do for Ed to go talk to Marty first. They said it was highly irregular.

And Ed asked them, "so have I been marked for being highly irregular?"

And, see, this is where we began to talk about the principle here. The charge of divisiveness was dropped in the meeting. They did not use that word again as far as I remember. Ed? They did not use that word again. So that's why I don't understand why there was a new church started this morning.

Then at that point Bob Gemple said that he felt like he had part responsibility in this confusion that has been created. And I think that's significant because we believe that. I believe that. I believe the reaction. And Ed did say in that conversation, he told them, he said "Marty, the last time I preached to this church, it was unified. The last time you preached to it, it was divided. I do not believe I have divided this church. I do not believe I caused division. I have simply stated what I believe in my convictions." And then we said that we wanted to be a part, we wanted to continue to work toward unity.

And we shared with them that we did not believe in our hearts that we have drawn lines. But that we had definitely felt that they had drawn lines.

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At the end of the meeting, after 3-1/2 hrs., they needed to leave. We hugged each other and Ed said, "I'm sorry." He acknowledged that he hated this happened. And that was the end of the meeting.

Side 2:

...saying that we wanted the freedom to say we were quite unwilling to agree with everything, to question the authority of that model. And I also have a very clear conscience that Ed and I have made every effort to keep unity. As far as I know, they have told us they would call us back. As far as I know, they have not called back to continue talking.

And I believe that we are still willing to do that. It's just that they have continued the process of beginning a new church, which I believe has brought the division. I just want to share this and you can -- this is from my heart and I hope that this is okay, Ed, for me to share -- is that I have had great hope in this movement in the past that this movement would evangelize the world. I would continue to want and to seek unity with this movement. At the same time, I cannot violate my conscience to practice something that is not set in scripture. (amen)

I personally have had to deal with feelings of being deceived this week. And I don't think anyone wants to believe that they have been deceived. But as I shared with both of them that I have been very disillusioned with the leaders of this movement. What I have shared with you today is the truth. It's the truth of what I have heard in the congregational meeting. It's the truth of what I heard Ed share with Marty on the phone. It's the truth of what I witnessed and participated in the conversations with Marty and Bob. And I want you to believe the truth. I have heard so many things come back that are not true. But I want you to know the truth. And I just ask you to have the courage to believe the truth because we have got to hold unto the truth, brothers and sisters. That's what the foundation of the church is -- is truth. And what I have shared with you tonight is the truth. Thank you. (applause)

Ed Powers: What I would like to suggest that we do because of the lateness of the hour, and I know if we get into a question and answer sessions, we are going to be here for at least another hour or hour and a half probably. What I'd like to suggest we do is that you write your questions -- any question that you have that has not been answered tonight -- just write it on a piece of paper at this time. Pass it to the aisle. Please sign your name to it. And we will take these questions and then Tuesday night we will meet together as an entire group again instead of meeting in Zones, we'll meet together here on Tuesday night and we'll answer the questions at that time. I think in doing it that way, we'll be able to do justice to the questions instead of trying to hurry over them tonight. It's a school day tomorrow and I know that some of you have to go home.

I really didn't anticipate that this portion would take this long. But hopefully what we have shared tonight has answered a lot of your questions. But if there are others, please write them down and pass them to the center aisle at this time.

As you are doing that and as we collect them, I just want to share this one thing. I have been getting letters and phone calls from various churches: from people in the church in New York, to people in the church in L.A. -- there are a lot of people who have the issues that we have raised on their hearts. I received this letter just today -- and it's addressed to you too:

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Dear Ed and all the church in Indy:

(This is from somebody in NY) Last night I learned of your bold and godly step forward. As disciples for six years now, my wife and I were ecstatic to hear the answer to prayer. We immediately began praying for you, the church there and other leaders in our movement and will continue to pray and fast on your behalf. Thank God for your courage. Love in Christ, **(and I will withhold the name here so that this person will not be marked.)**

We have -- folks, this has been tough. What we have gone through, what we are going through is tough. But we are raising issues that can change the face of this movement. And I just want to say that is the desire of all of us. That is our desire. Our desire is still to be unified with this movement. But we have to have unity on a different basis than what we have had in the past. When you look at 4,500 and some disciples in the Midwest growing by a total of 17 all last year, it is time that somebody calls for some changes to be made. (yes) And we're didn't even do that. We didn't call for them to change anything. Somebody has said "well, you know, this was a Matthew 18 issue and if you had something against them, you should have gone to them." Folks, we did not call upon the movement to change anything or to repent or any sin. Therefore, this is not a Matthew 18 issue. This was an issue involving our church. In fact, I just want to add this and then hopefully we'll close. Our intention was to bring our case to you as a staff and if you recall, we told you last Sunday night that if you, as a church, did not feel this way, that then our intention was not to create division, but our intention was to resign and to give you the leadership that you wanted.

Guys, in Acts 1, in Acts 6 and in Acts 15, we have examples in all those passages of local churches being involved in the making of important decisions. From the 120 disciples before Pentecost in Acts 1, who were involved in the decision to, along with the eleven apostles, they were involved in the decision to select a replacement for Judas. 120 were involved in that process in the casting of lots. In Acts 6, the multitude, the church, was involved in the process of selecting the deacons. It wasn't just the leaders who appointed them. The church was involved. The same thing was true in Acts 15 when you had the church in Antioch and the church in Jerusalem, cooperating together, not just the leaders, the church was called together to participate in the decision in solving the problem that existed over things that were being taught. The church was involved.

We involved you in that decision. We did that with a good conscience. We did that not to create division. We did that because that is biblical and we did it because, in fairness to you, instead of just leading you in a direction that you would not want to go -- because we had come to some real convictions here -- instead of just starting to lead you in that directions, we said "look, this is our intention. If you don't want to go in this direction, then let us know and we will resign." And I think you would need to think about that and remember that it was not our intent to divide.

Have those been collected? All right. Let's do this. We're going to go ahead and dismiss and you get them to Rich Farkas in the back if you haven't turned them in yet.

Okay. This has been raised. Number one, we are going to, as we said this morning we are going to go ahead and take the contribution tonight. And so hopefully you came prepared to do that. If you forgot, then maybe you can do it on Tuesday night. But the usher is going to come and just pass the trays. While we are doing that, the question has been asked about the tapes of last Sunday night's session and also

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tonight's session. We do have tapes. We're talking. And we're open to input. We're talking about whether or not to make those available. Whether or not those are going to get out and I struggle with this. I don't believe that the people in the movement would necessarily want those tapes to fall into the hands of their people. And we have not been trying to cause them a problem in any way. That has not been our intention. So we're thinking about that. And we'll make a decision by Tuesday night and we'll let you know whether or not we plan to release the tapes.

Woman: I think a lot of what has been going on has been half truths, half of what has been said, whatever. And if you make a decision not to release the tapes to at least with the understanding we're not going to send them out to other congregations for sale. That's just going to raise another (?) that the church didn't want anything put out about what they did.

I'm sure that you would like to have those tapes released. I'm sure you would. And I understand that. I don't want our good to be evil spoken of, as the Bible says. That's what I am struggling with. So, we are going to pray about it. I appreciate your input. We'll probably do it, okay? I mean we will probably just do it. But I am hesitant because I don't want to be accused of creating further division.

Inaudible comment.

Well, yes, again actually they are going to be available. I mean there is no doubt about that. What we are talking about here is timing. I mean, do we do it right now or try to work things out?

Inaudible question.

He raised the question, he said I said a little bit ago that the position of the discipling movement is that if you are not under the authority of the movement, then you are not in the Kingdom. And the question he asked is "what Kingdom?" Their kingdom or God's kingdom. And I am referring to God's kingdom, of course. Their position is that if you are not under the authority of the movement then you are not a part of God's kingdom.

Woman: That's not biblical, is it?

No. Go ahead and say something and then we'll be dismissed. This is a friend of mine that I have known for 30 years. We went to high school together, we started double dating together before either one had drivers licenses. And he is now in Denver. And when he heard about this, he came in just to be with me. I didn't invite him, okay? I didn't bring him in. I want to make than clear. And I didn't ask him to speak either. But -- will you keep this brief?

Eddie Howard: I never do anything brief. My name is Eddie Howard and I really hesitated to get involved because I am the real outsider here. But I have probably known Ed longer than anyone else in this auditorium other than his father and mother and family. And if you really want to know some good stories about Ed, you should have come to me. (laughter) I could have come up with a lot better stuff than what he shared tonight.

I want to tell you something about this man. And most of you probably already know this. But he is a man of integrity. Even when we were kids, I never stepped out of line without my conscience confronting me.

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And, Ed, I've always loved you for it. You are always honest with me. And I believe that God has been able to use me a lot because of a friend like you.

I have learned some real hard lessons in the 23 years that I have been preaching the gospel. One of those is that if you ever get in to the mindset of who can destroy the other's character the best, everyone loses. And I really learned this the hard way. The sins of my past and the sins of his past and the sins in your past that God has already forgiven -- God have mercy, we don't need to bring those up again. I'm thankful they have been nailed to the cross, aren't you?

And I want to encourage you with just a short passage of scripture. I hope you have your Bibles with you. Because so often when there is disagreement among brothers, we try to see who can hurt the other the most rather than going to the authority -- the word of God -- and learning from Him. I have a brother that encourages me with this passage over and over again. It's Isaiah 48. I just want to read 2 verses and I'm done. I work primarily with teenagers (cheers) and have for over 20 years. You know, a lot of times to a teenager and even to some of us adults, the word of God doesn't make a whole lot of sense. It seems like God is trying to put us in a box and keep us from having a good time. But I want you to take a look at this passage and share this with your lost friends: Isaiah 48:17. It says "this is what the Lord says. your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, I am the Lord your God who teaches you what is best for you." Isn't that a great God? "... who teaches you what is best for you and directs you in the way you should go." And then he says to Israel in verse 18, "if only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea." Brothers and sisters, I want to encourage you on two things: #1 love this man. He has put his life on the line for the gospel. I was with him in India when he nearly died. He was in my arms. He loves lost people. He loves you. Don't abandon him. And #2 don't abandon the word. (applause)

Bobbi Powers: I just want to say something really quickly. I just really appreciate the love we have felt from you all this week. Most of my message -- unlike Ed, were very, very encouraging. My machine was filled up with "Bobbi, we love you." More of that. And finally the fourth time she called I picked it up and said, "aren't you getting a little obsessive with the positive comments here?" But she just called and called and encouraged us. We got calls, I mean my kitchen looks like a forest. People brought us baked bread. I mean it's been great. Ed lost 10 pounds this week. No more cake, you know. And I haven't cooked this week. My sister, not the one that I hung up on, but Ed's other sister that's here, mopped my kitchen today. I mean, a mouse could have lived in my kitchen an eternity, literally. And I just appreciate the support from everybody. This has been the hardest thing for both of us. We love this church. We've dedicated our lives to this church. It has been very, very hard. But we really appreciate the support that we have gotten from you and the love that we have felt. And I couldn't leave tonight without saying that. Thanks so much.

Okay. We have had quite a time tonight. Love you all. Stay strong. Great things are going to happen, guys, if we hang in there and persevere. Let's close out with a word of prayer.

Father, thank you so much for loving us. Thank you God for blessing us. Thank you for giving us your Word. And, Father, please help us to be men and women who really do long for unity. Father, help us to be willing to have unity on the right basis. Help us to have unity on the basis of what your word teaches. Father, that's our desire. Keep that desire ever in our hearts, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.