

June 6, 2003

To: The Brothers and Sisters in the International Churches of Christ, especially to the Central Region of the Los Angeles International Church of Christ

From: Cecil Wooten

Subject: Farewell Letter to the Church

With great sadness I write this letter to the International Churches of Christ, especially my brothers and sisters in the Central Region. I want all of you to know the depth of my love for you and my gratitude for the love so many of you have shown to Helen and me. I ask you, therefore, to read carefully what I have written. I thought my perspective might be helpful to you. Pardon the length, but I feel that it is time that I speak.

It has recently come to my attention that some members of the Central Region do not wish to take part in resolving the issues concerning the termination of Marty and Cathy Wooten and the mistreatment of their daughter, Catherine. I realize the burden and pain caused by unresolved issues between leaders. However, I would like the opportunity to pose some questions to those of you experiencing this difficulty:

1. Who is Jesus referring to as “the church” in Matthew 18:17 when he instructs the offended brother to “tell it to the church”? Who is “the church”? Does he mean the individual members are “the church”? If not, who then is “the church”? Does he expect the individual member to make a judgment and respond? And “if he refuses to listen even to the church”, who then is to “treat him as a pagan or a tax collector”?
2. Who was Paul addressing in 1 Corinthians 5:4, “When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus?” He expected the church, the individual members, to “hand this man over to Satan so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.” Or in verse 11, who “must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother” and refuses to repent? Who is instructed “with such a man do not even eat”?
3. Do you think Jesus, in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, held the individual members responsible for the sin in their churches and for what they tolerated? Who does he expect to repent? If not the individual members, who then was to receive Jesus’ discipline for the failure to repent?

I was raised during the years of the Great Depression and entered World War II at the age of 18. Without the materialistic possibilities of today’s world, honesty and integrity of character were highly valued. Those fortunate enough to survive the Depression carried those values throughout the war. There was no greater honor in my generation than to die on the battlefield in defense of country, honesty, and integrity. I fought alongside some of the most heroic men in history and watched multitudes of them die because of a simple oath to protect their country and their fellow soldiers.

The business world after the war was built largely on these principles. I was able to sell multi-million dollar oil refinery projects to men such as J. Paul Getty with nothing more than a handshake because of the value we placed on our word. Our word was our life. It is with these convictions that I can no longer for conscience sake, be part of the LA Church at this time.

I am extremely concerned about the integrity and honesty of the leadership of the LA Church, particularly the leaders of the Central Region. Their recent response to Marty Wooten’s letter regarding his termination is deeply disturbing. I realize Marty is my son, but I too attended the recent “resolution” talks and cannot disagree more with what was presented to you.

During my years as Chief Administrator for the ICOC, I have often felt great pressure to compromise my convictions concerning the integrity of the administrative policies governing the church. I have been yelled at in meetings when I felt it necessary to “put my foot down” concerning policy and expenditures to protect the church from ethical and legal consequences. I have witnessed first hand since 1988 a consistent pattern of leaders protecting leaders to the neglect of the weak and the compromise of integrity.

The Peacemakers' statement to the Central Region "We implore you to trust the character and integrity of those persons involved in the arbitration process who spent so many hours and made every effort to objectively listen, question, discuss, mediate, pray, and discern," was written by some of the same men who did nothing while I was yelled at and under great pressure during the formulation of and adherence to the church's administrative policies. I would like to trust their character and integrity, but have seen little evidence to do so in this situation and in the situations mentioned above. I spent the same amount of time as they have in these resolution meetings and do not agree with their conclusions. Does that mean that I am a man of little character and have no integrity? Am I not trustworthy? Marty, Cathy, and I have presented the truth and have supported our statements with evidence. In addition to the written documentation we have provided, we have several **audiotapes** to substantiate our claims.

The truth is, I have seen more integrity, honesty, and courage in Catherine Wooten than I have seen in these men. Some have wrongly thought that she has been used as a pawn in this dispute. To the contrary, Catherine decided on her own to go public with her rape in order to help people understand the graceless treatment she received from the leadership of the church and to help others and herself to heal. It is her hope that others will find the courage to stand up for what is right. It is commendable for her to be so vulnerable and open with so many people at a young age and to oppose unbiblical judgment and application of the truth. I would have liked to have seen the same courage and heart from some of our leaders.

A few days prior to May 28<sup>th</sup>, I phoned Al Baird and Bruce Williams, and left the following message: "If you think a meeting with the Wootens (Marty, Cathy, and myself) would be beneficial to see how best to proceed from here, please let me know." My call was never returned. On May 28, 2003 at 11:05 p.m., I was copied an email from Al Baird with the statement: "Here is the response letter that was prepared to present a more balanced picture to your letter". Earlier that evening, the leadership distributed their response letter to the members of the Central Region. On May 29, 2003, Al sent the following email, with the May 28<sup>th</sup> Peacemakers' response attached, to approximately one hundred other ICOC individuals around the world:

"Recently Marty and Cathy Wooten circulated a letter that is one-sided, slanderous, and divisive. It did not even mention that they chose a group to arbitrate their dispute with Northern Federation after his termination. This response letter is from the group that they selected and the Northern Federation group approved. It contains a number of pertinent facts that were left out of the Wooten letter. Our goal is righteousness and unity."

First, I would like to respond to Al's statement indicating that Marty and Cathy chose the group who came to arbitrate. I will spend the remainder of this document responding to the other charges stated here and in the May 28<sup>th</sup> Response from the Peacemakers. I understand that Marty Fuqua and Reese participated in the writing and the review of their response, but have not been named as participants.

Marty and Cathy asked the brothers they knew and trusted to participate in the resolution meetings. Unfortunately, because of the present turmoil in many of the ICOC churches, they were unable to come. Marty and Cathy did ask Steve Staten to come because, at the time, Marty Fuqua was considering moving to Chicago. They felt it would be in the best interest of the Chicago church if the Chicago eldership were aware of these discussions. Al suggested that Andy Fleming participate along with himself and Bruce Williams. Because the meetings had already been postponed and were long overdue, Marty and Cathy felt that further delaying the talks would result in no talks; they agreed to proceed. Prior to the meetings, Al agreed to Marty Wooten's request that Dave Graham could participate in the meetings. However, on the morning of March 24<sup>th</sup>, the first day of the meetings, Marty and Cathy requested that Dave Graham, who they invited to the meeting, be allowed to stay for the entire meeting. The Peacemakers did not agree to do so. Marty and Cathy did not want to argue about this at the onset of the meeting or hinder further discussions. They submitted and Dave left after the first session.

The Peacemakers' May 28<sup>th</sup> letter states "we are shocked and appalled by the Wooten letter". There is nothing in the Wooten letter that had not been previously presented to the Peacemakers, the Fuquas, and Neylands. At the beginning of the March 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, we had a lengthy discussion about what the proper

course of action would be if resolution could not be reached in this group. Marty and Cathy told the group they believed that if resolution could not be reached with this group, the next step, according to Matthew 18:15-17, was to “tell it to the church”. The Peacemakers did not agree that Matthew 18 should be followed in this case. Marty, Cathy, and I did not agree with their understanding of this passage. Bruce suggested that we proceed with the meeting and revisit the issue later. The meeting continued and the topic was not discussed further.

Before leaving the March 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, Cathy spoke to Al Baird and Robyn Williams. She did not feel resolved. The following day, she wrote the Peacemakers a letter expressing why she did not feel resolved and asked for their help (see attachment 1). The Peacemakers never discussed her letter with her or addressed her concerns. Al sent out a statement the same day he received Cathy’s letter with an entirely different viewpoint of the March 24-25<sup>th</sup> meetings. Cathy told Al that his view of the meetings was so different, she wondered whether they were at the same meetings (see and compare attachments 1 and 2). Following the April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, Robyn and Cathy exchanged emails about this meeting. Again, Cathy’s letter to Robyn (requesting it to be forwarded to the other Peacemakers) clearly shows that Marty and Cathy were still not resolved following that meeting and why (see attachment 3). Marty and I read both of Cathy’s letters and agreed with their contents.

On April 21, 2003, I sent the attached April 21<sup>st</sup> letter (attachment 4) to the Peacemakers and Jon Augustine. I met with Andy Fleming on April 21<sup>st</sup> and briefly discussed the contents of my letter with him. He recommended that if I presented the information to the church, then I should present it through the Central Region deacons first. On Wednesday, April 23, 2003, I met with Al Baird, Bruce Williams, and John Mannel for nearly three hours to discuss my April 21<sup>st</sup> letter. Al told me that the church couldn’t “handle this information” and advised me not to tell it to the church. Although he admitted that his suggestion was only advice, he stated that he would “strongly oppose” me if I took it to the church. Following Andy’s suggestion, I sent the April 26, 2003 draft 5 letter (attachment 5, with all attachments and attachment4), to three of the Central Region deacons who also advised me not to “tell it to the church”. (My letter dated April 26<sup>th</sup> was never sent because Marty and Cathy decided to respond directly). Ultimately, Marty, Cathy, and I decided to follow what the scriptures teach about conflict resolution according to Matthew 18:15-17. It is difficult for me to understand how the Peacemakers could have thought that this matter was resolved and be “shocked and appalled” by the distribution of the Wooten Termination letter.

This reaction, in my opinion, is deceitful, but consistent with the defensive leadership pattern I have witnessed throughout the years. I love Al Baird very much and have known him for many years. However, it is difficult for Al to take a stand on any issue other than what serves and protects the leadership of the church. Several people, including myself, have spoken with Al about his not dealing with the truth and doing nothing to correct injustices occurring in the church. As a result, many people have been hurt and will continue to be hurt unless he changes his focus to “guarding the flock”.

Point 1 in the May 28<sup>th</sup> response states: “We saw no evidence that Marty Fuqua or anyone else was trying to set up the Wootens’ termination or use Catherine Wooten’s tragic circumstance as a way to accomplish that”. They also state, “Tom told us that he does not believe that Marty Fuqua was trying to get the Wootens fired, and in fact, was trying to find a way to keep them in the ministry up to the time of their termination”. In May 2002, Chris Fuqua told Cathy that she and Marty Fuqua felt Marty Wooten was in a “power struggle for control of the Northern Federation”. On the same day, Marty Fuqua told Marty Wooten that “he did not trust Marty Wooten, had not trusted him for years (since the Crossroads church days-over 20 years ago), and had taken away the 20 Great Plains churches so that Marty Wooten would have “no place to land”. Marty and Cathy had not heard these statements before their leave of absence and were not able to discuss them until the resolution meetings a year later. It appears Marty and Chris Fuqua’s own statements to Marty and Cathy validate the information that Tom and John provided Marty and Cathy in November 2002.

The following is from an **audiotape** from a conversation Tom McCurry and John Mannel had with Marty and Cathy in November 2002. They explained to Marty and Cathy their assessment of the events that led to their September 2002 termination.

The words in brackets were added for clarification:

*“[Tom said] ‘You [Marty Wooten] were appointed an elder and then you set out to try to help some of the relationship issues with everybody. I feel like that was perceived as, ‘okay, now he’s an elder; now he’s trying to take over’. I know it was perceived that way. I’ve heard Marty [Fuqua] say that. Then all the turmoil came up over Kip, and elders, and leadership and all that kind of stuff and Marty [Wooten] took a very strong stand on that even in meetings and everything else. That just added to Marty’s [Wooten] ‘trying to run Northern Federation’. I don’t remember the exact timing, but what I remember most, that’s when most of the really sad stuff came out about Catherine. That’s it, that’s enough. And since then, I’ve heard Marty [Fuqua] say it. I can quote it, ‘he [Marty Wooten] is out to get me’. It became you versus Marty [Fuqua]....I don’t know that that’s an unreasonable assumption to make without communication. And so that’s why this thing is so tense and why it got to be so hard-line’. [Marty Wooten] asked, ‘So where did Catherine fit into all of this?’ [Tom said], ‘Here’s a guy that’s an elder and his daughter’s struggling. I don’t have all the facts behind it, but you know as an elder that disqualifies him. This whole issue of what is a leadership qualification? Do we apply those standards to GSLs and everything else? It was just kind of, my opinion, the final stake...I know Marty [Fuqua] did feel and I don’t think he totally changed his mind; he felt like it was a power struggle; you versus him. That was the end of that. You add all these things up... you do things and you don’t see the relationship trouble it could cause...if I’m really dogmatic about this, what will this do to my relationships...all these thing you were trying to help with...that Marty [Fuqua] is not good at resolving relationships...Reese even believes you were trying with Reese and were trying with Marty [Fuqua], but the way it got perceived....it really hurt you...’. [Cathy asked them] ‘You said something to Marty [Wooten] about Maria [Fuqua], what did that do to our relationship with the Fuquas [referring to the April 2002 conversation between Maria Fuqua and Catherine Wooten]?’ [John said], ‘My perception is...I wasn’t involved directly. No one was there besides Maria and Catherine, so there’s no one to validate either side. Both girls have their own perception of what was said and what was heard. What evidently Maria heard and told Mary Kay Neyland was something to the effect she [Maria] is not a free thinker....in some regard an invitation that Maria felt to loosen up spiritually, say more, do more, whatever. When that got back to Marty and Chris, they said that’s it; it’s got to stop. That added whatever to an already smoldering fire. They felt Maria was being pulled away.’ [Tom said] ‘It seems to me that was **the** stake in the ground. That right there was [when the Fuquas decided] ‘to separate, to withdraw, back off [from Marty Wooten]. [Marty Wooten asked] ‘For them to withdraw?’ [Tom answered], ‘Yes, there were a lot of things brewing, but that seemed to be, from what I remember, **the** stake in the ground’. [John said], ‘I know that’s not Catherine’s take. Whatever happened there, I know sometimes we say something with one intent and something entirely different comes out of it. But that’s the life that we have’. [Cathy said], ‘I’m discouraged; you’ve just confirmed everything we felt...They [Fuquas] never said anything like that to us...I can hear we are very strong in our projection’. [Tom admitted that he felt things about us that he did not talk to us about and said], ‘I think the people we’re talking about here have acted the same way and not dealt with things and then get their guts full and acted poorly.’”*

Marty and Cathy had never heard these thoughts and feelings from Marty and Chris Fuqua directly. In the March 25<sup>th</sup> resolution meeting, Cathy read her notes from the taped conversation to the Peacemaker group. Tom and John admitted in the meeting that this was, in fact, the conversation they had with Marty and Cathy. Al said that these statements were simply their opinions and dismissed them as Tom and John’s opinions only. However, Tom said he *heard* Marty Fuqua make these statements. Tom also said that this was how he *knew* Marty Fuqua perceived Marty Wooten’s attempts to bring about needed change in the church, the discipleship group, and in Marty Fuqua’s personal life. He knew this because he heard Marty Fuqua say so.

In addition, in the March 24<sup>th</sup> resolution meeting, Bruce asked Marty Fuqua if it was true that he had trust issues with Marty Wooten. Marty Fuqua admitted he had. Bruce Williams then asked Marty Fuqua whether he ever told Marty Wooten about his trust issues before the Wooten leave of absence in May 2002. Marty Fuqua replied that he had not.

I believe the evidence shows Marty Fuqua had unresolved issues with both Marty Wooten and Catherine. Like Saul, it appears that Marty Fuqua’s resentment and unfounded fears led to his subsequent ill treatment of Catherine and the Wooten family.

On Sunday morning, June 1, 2003, I met with Tom McCurry for breakfast before church to discuss Tom's statement to the Peacemakers that "he does not believe that Marty Fuqua was trying to get the Wootens fired". I reminded him that this was different from what he told Marty, Cathy, and me. I discussed the previous conversations I had with Tom concerning his involvement in the termination of Marty and Cathy and the mistreatment of their daughter. Following the April 2002 conversation between Maria Fuqua and Catherine Wooten, Marty and Chris Fuqua informed Marty Wooten he was permanently removed from his position as GSL on May 13, 2002 stating, "We have the authority to put you in and the authority to take you out."

When Marty Wooten informed me of these decisions, I went to Tom McCurry's home and asked him how he could have participated in this action, in light of the fact that both he and Marty Fuqua told me Marty and Cathy had done an outstanding job as GSL. Tom told me that he did not know that Marty Fuqua intended to take the GSL position away from Marty Wooten at the May 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. (John Mannel also told me he did not know this either). However, in November 2002, after Tom and John gave Marty and Cathy the information contained in the above excerpt, I went back to Tom to clarify his May 2002 statement to me, (that he was unaware of Marty Fuqua's intent to remove Marty Wooten from the GSL position in the May 13, 2002 meeting). Tom explained that he did not know in advance that the GSL removal was to actually occur during the May 13, 2002 meeting, but he did know Marty Fuqua had already decided in April 2002 to remove Marty Wooten. Tom's clarification statement to me in November 2002 appears contradictory to his statement in the Peacemakers' response. Tom McCurry has been my close friend and fellow worker in the Lord for many years. I believe that Tom is loyal to Marty Fuqua and is reluctant to put him in a bad light. It grieved me to tell him what I thought, but I did, face to face, on June 1, 2003.

Point 2: The Peacemakers state that Marty Wooten "was resistant to step down from the position voluntarily" as an elder. In June 2002, Marty Wooten offered to step down from the eldership in a Northern Federation (men's) discipleship group. Reese confirmed this in the January 7, 2003 meeting in the Baird's home. The Fuquas had already removed Marty Wooten from his GSL position in the May 13, 2002 meeting. If Marty Wooten's offer to step down had been accepted, the eldership issue would have been removed leaving Marty Wooten in the role of teacher in the LA church and the Northern Federation. As a result, Marty Wooten would still have a position of influence in the Northern Federation discipleship group and remain a "threat" to Marty Fuqua. Without prior discussion with Marty and Cathy, he was informed in the September 6, 2002 meeting that he was already "unanimously" disqualified for the three roles of elder, teacher, and GSL.

In addition to the first offer in June 2002, Marty Wooten stated in the September 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, he had no problem resigning from the role of an elder but asked for the biblical basis for his disqualification. On the evening of September 6<sup>th</sup>, Marty Wooten sent an email to the brothers he asked to come to help him resolve this conflict. He wrote that he "wanted to be shown the biblical basis (for his disqualification) rather than the primary reason being distrust because he had chosen to express his concerns about how many people have been treated in our group and in our churches". His email was considered "divisive". Marty was not given the choice to resign from the eldership in the September 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Instead, the group informed him that they had already "unanimously" disqualified him from the eldership, the role of teacher and GSL simultaneously in their meeting on September 5<sup>th</sup>. Although the discipleship group denies they did this, the **audiotape** of this meeting and September 6<sup>th</sup> email contradicts their statement. On September 15, 2002, Marty Wooten was informed there was no ministry position for him in any of the Northern Federation churches, including the Metro Super Region in LA. This is consistent with the February 3, 2003 announcement which also states that the group had removed Marty and Cathy from **any** ministry responsibilities due to their "very serious spiritual condition".

Tom McCurry's September 6, 2002, email states, "The group no longer believes that Marty and Cathy are qualified to serve in the position of elder, teacher, or Geographic Sector Leader". The disqualifying issues in the September 6, 2002 meeting were Catherine and the strained relationships between the Wootens, Fuquas, and Neylands. The February 3, 2003 announcement to the Central region BibleTalk Leaders states

his disqualification from the three roles and the reason being Marty and Cathy's "very serious spiritual issues". In the April 18, 2003 meeting, Marty Fuqua denied that Catherine was any part of the issue in the September 6<sup>th</sup> meeting (Wooten Termination letter page 9). The **audiotapes** of the September 6<sup>th</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup> meetings contradict this statement. And if Catherine wasn't an "issue", then what was the biblical basis for Marty Wooten's disqualification as an elder? The Peacemakers state that they agree that Marty Wooten is not qualified to serve as an elder. If so, what is the reason? Because Catherine "struggled" and was wrongfully labeled a "fallaway" as early as April 2002 (John Mannel's opinion) and effectively, driven from the church? If Marty Wooten sinned as an elder, then biblically he needed to be rebuked publicly, not terminated. And what is the scriptural disqualification of Marty Wooten from the role of teacher, GSL, and evangelist? Does the qualification of an elder scripturally apply to these roles? **Marty and Cathy are not seeking reemployment in the church, but are addressing hypocrisy, abuse of authority, deceit, judgment, condemnation, shame, and the unbiblical application of the scriptures, i.e., false teaching. They desire a public admission and apology to Catherine and to their family. Marty and Reese have not publicly apologized for or retracted the slanderous announcement to the Central Region Bible Talk Leaders.**

Point 3, the issue of a threatened lawsuit: Did an attorney call, write a letter, or contact anyone in the church about a lawsuit? Harvey Woodford, legal counsel for the Northern Federation, advised Marty and Cathy to speak to an attorney to review the severance papers before signing them; which they did. Marty Wooten told Marty Fuqua (in a separate **taped** conversation), John Mannel and Tom McCurry, that he was torn between 1 Corinthians 6 and Romans 13. Marty Wooten believed that laws had been broken, but felt unsure about how to go about resolving the issue of Marty Fuqua's sinful treatment of Catherine (at fourteen and seventeen) and their wrongful termination. Was Marty Wooten's openness about what is the biblical course of action when laws are broken considered the threat of a lawsuit? Marty Wooten told them he felt bad for even thinking this way and that he did not intend to pursue this line of thought. He explained to them that he was reluctant to sign severance papers when it meant possibly relocating his family. Catherine's doctor and therapist advised Marty and Cathy that she needed stability. She was afraid to move at this time and Marty and Cathy could not conceive of leaving her behind. Also, the threat of a possible move caused Catherine to again have suicidal thoughts. Marty and Cathy told these brothers they felt enormous pressure from them to immediately sign the severance papers and asked for more time. Perhaps the statement by Dr. Berger concerning the treatment Catherine received by the leadership of the church, and confirmed by Catherine's doctor and therapist, "they psychologically raped her" and their expressed willingness to testify in court, if needed, is the threatened lawsuit.

Point 4 states: "The Wooten letter contained slanderous statements about Reese Neyland and his character". A statement is slanderous only if the statement is false. Please refer to the attached April 21<sup>st</sup> letter to the Peacemakers (attachment 4). I believe that no untrue statement has been made about Reese. Reese's addiction issues and the term "sexual behavior" are found in the March 2<sup>nd</sup> letter by Mike Leatherwood, which is corroborated by Dave Graham's March 6<sup>th</sup> letter. These two men heard Reese confess sin in April 2002. Late in the summer of 2002, Mike and Dave decided to leave the fellowship of the ICOC. John Mannel told me that their testimony is no longer credible because they are "fallaways". I disagree that a person's ability to tell the truth is associated with membership in the ICOC.

Because Al Baird refused to discuss Reese's issues in the March 24-25<sup>th</sup> or April 18<sup>th</sup> resolution meetings, these allegations of sin were never resolved even with the testimony of additional witnesses, who are not "fallaways". And if Reese had already repented, why did he discuss it with Mike and Dave in April 2002? Why was Reese unwilling to discuss this when Dave was present in the room on March 24<sup>th</sup>? My primary concern for Reese has never been his tobacco use or even his "sexual behavior," but his persistent pattern of lying. In fact, last week, Dave Graham told Marty Wooten that Reese's "sexual behavior," ("a struggle with pornography twice a year"), is not what Reese confessed to both Mike and Dave in April 2002. However, I am convinced that producing another letter from two "fallaways" will not change anything.

In my April 23, 2003 meeting with Al, Bruce, and John, Al asked me why I believed Dave Graham, who had lied for over five years about his addiction, and did not believe Reese who I have known for over twenty years. My answer was I believe Dave because he confessed, was completely open, has not been defensive, has repented, and has not been caught in further lies, demonstrating fruits of repentance and

continues to be open and honest. Reese, on the other hand, is in denial, defensive, closed, and unwilling (with Al's full support) to discuss his issues, even in the resolution meetings with the Peacemakers. Although, Reese apologized for "being deceitful" to Sister X, it was two years late and only after I personally confronted him about it. Not only is this true, but Reese continues to deny at least five other lies, including lying to me and Marty Wooten.

Point 5: The May 28<sup>th</sup> response states that Marty and Cathy have refused to comply with their request for a written statement of apology. Marty and Cathy are willing to publicly state the sins they committed which contributed to such a serious relationship breakdown. However, they did not agree to write a statement to the church about resolution taking place because neither repentance nor resolution has taken place concerning the following issues. Cathy's letter to Robyn is clear about this (attachment 3). They feel this would have been dishonest and do not want to mislead the church. Their refusal to submit to the Peacemakers in the April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting was viewed as a "lack of humility" and as a result, even their love for the brothers and sisters in the church was questioned.

It is true that Marty Fuqua, Reese Neyland, Marty and Cathy Wooten made some apologies. However, Marty Fuqua and Reese have not apologized for the most serious offenses or admitted wrongdoing. Marty Fuqua regrets the talk he had with Catherine when she was fourteen. However, he has not acknowledged the seriousness of his actions. Catherine was judged, condemned, shamed, and falsely labeled a "fallaway". Their lack of compassion and hypocrisy effectively drove her from the church. The Northern Federation discipleship group and Marty Fuqua have not accepted responsibility for what was done to Catherine and consequently, denied their responsibility for "causing a little one to sin". Because Marty and Reese, in particular, are in denial about their sin against Catherine, we felt they should not talk to Catherine (or the other children) until they could offer a sincere apology. We also felt it would be beneficial to wait until Marty Fuqua was more in touch with his emotions following the sudden loss of his father. John Mannel agreed with our suggestion.

Secondly, Marty Fuqua denied he used Catherine to dismiss Marty Wooten. I believe the evidence is clear. Marty Fuqua did not trust Marty Wooten, was not honest about it, was afraid of losing his WSL position, and orchestrated Marty Wooten's wrongful termination and used Catherine to do so. I believe Marty and Chris Fuqua resented Catherine because of an alleged conversation between their daughter and Catherine that no one could validate, and yet, they wrongly assumed Catherine was guilty. They also now deny Catherine was any part of the Marty Wooten's disqualification on September 6, 2002. The **audiotapes** of the September 6<sup>th</sup> and the November 1<sup>st</sup> meetings contradict this claim. Marty and Chris Fuqua have been guilty of gossip, slander, conflict avoiding, which led to dishonesty in their relationships. In fact, this is not the first time that Marty and Chris Fuqua had strong feelings about people, weren't honest about it, and sinned against them.

Thirdly, the Northern Federation group denied they disqualified Marty Wooten for all three roles simultaneously and informed him about their "unanimous" decision on September 6<sup>th</sup>. The **audiotape** of this meeting contradicts what they now deny.

Fourthly, because Reese has refused to comment on his sins and has still made no statement of apology for repeatedly lying, I do not believe that he has repented and I am not resolved.

And most seriously, the current eldership of the Los Angeles church and the Peacemakers, know about Reese's hypocrisy and are unwilling to acknowledge his sin. The abuse of authority, favoritism, and the double standard must stop. It is ironic that these same sins have already been publicly acknowledged and confessed by the leadership of the LA church.

In conclusion, Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6: 4-5 that he believed all Christians, not just leaders, have the ability to discern the truth in settling disputes. I believe that every member is able to judge and discern for himself what the truth is in this matter. People should hear both sides. This has been my premise from the beginning. I understand that the information distributed is shocking and disappointing. I am sorry for the pain that has caused anyone. Taking something before the church is also radical; in the past, sin in the leadership has never been exposed to the members of the church and left for them to discern and judge the

truth. Marty, Cathy, and I decided to “tell it to the church” because all other means to biblically resolve this matter have been exhausted and we believe this is the biblical course of action to resolve conflict in the church. Each member should make his own judgment, follow his own conscience, and take the appropriate action as he or she sees fit.

I, Cecil Wooten, have drafted this letter, but Marty and Cathy participated in its review. They also wish to make a statement to the church. Therefore, we will all sign it.

At this time, Helen and I have decided to no longer attend the Central Region services. This will enable you to have time to think and discuss this situation among yourselves without our presence. Now that it has been admitted that the ICOC is not the only church recognized by God, we are going to exercise our freedom to worship and fellowship in our home. We are open to and desire resolution but only when the truth is disclosed and discussed. We will miss you very much.

If you have further questions or wish to listen to the audiotapes, call me or Marty and Cathy Wooten. I can be reached at 818-790-9941 or [cecilwooten@hotmail.com](mailto:cecilwooten@hotmail.com). Marty can be reached at 818-790-7591 or [martinwooten@yahoo.com](mailto:martinwooten@yahoo.com). Cathy can be reached at 818-790-0182 or [cathywooten@hotmail.com](mailto:cathywooten@hotmail.com).

Love in Christ,  
Cecil Wooten

We, Marty and Cathy, also want to express our love for the church and to apologize for our sins against you. The stand we have taken for Catherine is far stronger and bolder than any stand we have taken for any of you, our brothers and sisters in Christ. We feel most convicted about this. As a shepherd in the church and his wife, we acknowledge our sins and apologize to those we sinned against because of cowardice, not obeying the command to love others as you love yourself, and to protect the flock. We are deeply sorry and beg your forgiveness for the pain we have caused so many of you. We also write with great sadness our farewell to you. We will not be attending services in the Central Region, but will worship God in our own home. At this time, we do not believe the church to be a safe place for us and for our children. We feel we have forgiven the Fuquas and Neylands and continue to desire resolution. They were our friends for many years. We miss them and their families. However, like Cecil and Helen, we believe resolution can only take place when there is full disclosure, public admission of wrongdoing, and repentance.

With love and gratitude,  
Marty and Cathy Wooten

March 26, 2003

Dear Bruce, Robyn, Al, Gloria, Steve, and Andy,

Thank you for the time you spent with us. It may have been even more exhausting for you than it was for us. It is apparent that you demonstrated a tremendous amount of patience and love for all of us. I appreciate your even handedness. More than that, it was refreshing to not feel your judgment. This is especially appreciated and I am very grateful.

I wanted to express some of the feelings I had leaving the meeting because I want to be honest with you, and felt it would have been unproductive and damaging to have done so in the meeting last night.

First of all, I want to say I feel very convicted about my sins. I truly see that I have sinned in many ways. There are no doubts in my mind of my contribution to this mess. However, I am saddened by the fact that I do not feel the Fuquas and Neylands comprehend what they did to Catherine, to her faith, and to us. I am not suggesting that Catherine did nothing to damage her own faith, but I feel Catherine's faith has been significantly damaged by their unloving conduct and poor judgment. Catherine and her faith and trust need to be restored. I realize she may need much time for her healing to take place. She needs to see their sorrow about this. I do not feel they are ready to apologize to the children, especially to Catherine. However, I believe a public acknowledgement of and apology for the sins committed against Catherine and our family may need to be made sooner than their personal apology. I can not predict the effect this will have on our children, but I feel it will help them and us to continue to heal. I also feel this is necessary because the Northern Federation has already made public announcements about us. (I have no problem stating publicly what my sins are). I also need help in another area. I still feel Catherine's struggles were used in order to deal with their feelings about us. Because they did not tell us what the real issues were, we felt and Catherine felt that she was the issue. I realize I can not know what was in their hearts at the time, but I feel they took advantage of the moment. Perhaps, if they had loved and accepted her, I would not feel that they had used her. Perhaps, if the Fuquas and Reese, specifically, had been more expressive about this yesterday, I would feel differently. Catherine is my daughter and I have agonized over her pain and loss. I need help seeing their sorrow about this. I understand they can not manufacture feelings that are not there. I am willing to be patient. We have waited a long time to get to the whole story. Please help them and me with this.

Secondly, I definitely gossiped about Reese, but I do not believe I slandered him regarding his past use of tobacco and his defensive posture about how serious his tobacco use was. As I said on Monday, I believe he is still deceived about it for the following reasons. In every conversation I have heard of or been personally involved in, including the January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, Reese has minimized the seriousness of his sin by claiming that his use of tobacco was "casual". At the end of the January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, it was Al's conclusion that Reese's tobacco use was "serious and that Reese sinned". I wonder if Reese agrees with Al's statement? I have never heard Reese acknowledge he had a serious problem, much less say it. Because of his response in the meeting yesterday, (his reluctance to be open and what appeared to me to be defensiveness), I have no reason to feel he sees it any differently. Perhaps he does, but I have not heard Reese say so. Therefore, I have trouble believing it. It would help me a lot to hear his "heart" about this issue. Because he did not address it and because he still seems so guarded, it has left me with questions. I do not believe that a thirty-year history of tobacco use is casual. I certainly do not accept that a thirty-year history involving daily use and chewing it in the pulpit while preaching, is a casual use of tobacco. Last week at the Wednesday Midweek service, Reese announced that he was "moving over" from serving as a Northern Federation elder to serve as the Central Region elder. Marty and I understand that Al was unaware this decision and announcement had been made. I am requesting that Reese not serve as a Central Region elder until he has attended and graduated from the CR group that Will Ashley leads in South Central Region. If Reese would do this, I believe I can feel confident that Reese's addiction issues have been dealt with by someone who has the expertise in this area and is objective. (I do not have a problem here saying "past addiction" issues.) You are aware of Mike Leatherwood's and Dave Graham's expressed concern for Reese. In addition, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, the CR leaders in the Central Region, are at

odds over their opposing opinions regarding these issues with Reese. As I understand it, \_\_\_\_\_ has, in fact, withdrawn his name from serving as a deacon because of this and other issues. I feel very unresolved about that. If Reese attended the CR group Will Ashley leads, I feel assured that Reese's issues would be dealt with objectively and thoroughly. I want to believe he is "above reproach". I believe this would help alleviate my concerns about his spiritual condition. Hearing Reese say what he believes now about his tobacco use would also help me a great deal. I believe this suggestion might also help others who are aware of these issues, particularly \_\_\_\_\_ and the rest of the brothers who were in Reese's discipleship group. In addition, I need help because I am in conflict about whether it is best for him and the Fuquas to serve in a leadership role at this time.

I feel that both the Fuquas and Neylands crossed a line in what they did to Catherine. A heartless lack of compassion for anyone's pain is unacceptable. Marty and Reese told Catherine and us she was like their own daughter. Catherine was barely seventeen years old when she was raped. I can accept they feel badly about this and about their conduct. Again, I do not believe they are in touch with the reality of what they did to her. Perhaps, in time, this will change. From my perspective, I do not feel either couple should serve in a leadership role. Perhaps in the future, but not now. I understand that due to the financial crisis in the Northern Federation and Central Region, neither couple may have a paid ministry position now. But I am concerned about their present ability to serve in another church. I believe they need time to heal and to understand the dynamics that caused them to judge Catherine so harshly and treat her so impatiently and thoughtlessly. I do not believe Catherine has been the only person damaged by their sins (or by mine), but I feel what they did to her and to us should not be minimized. Perhaps my thoughts about this may seem vindictive. And I can hear I am vindictive; I know I am not objective. Perhaps I would feel differently after both private and public apologies have been made. Is it unreasonable of me to raise the question? I believe both couples could benefit greatly from the experience of not being in the ministry. This past year has been very difficult, but it has also been very healing for our family. Please do not think I believe that their healing can only take place outside of a leadership role. I do not want them to suffer, but I desire very much for them to understand and to feel. I realize that true understanding is not possible unless you have "been there", and so I may never have what I desire. Perhaps, understanding and reassurance is what I need and not a resignation. I am not really sure. I want them to have an opportunity for true healing and change. I believe they need time and help to do this kind of work. You mentioned that Reese has been hurting. I believe you; I wish I could have sensed his pain. It would have helped me. However, it seemed very obvious to me that the Fuquas are dealing with much pain. I am certain I do not truly understand their pain, but I felt for them. While I do not want to inflict additional pain, I am asking for you to discuss this amongst yourselves and help me understand what your thoughts are. I believe I could trust your judgement about this and let it go, but I know I need your help.

I apologize that this letter may project ingratitude or that a lack of real progress has been made. I do not feel that way at all. I believe God answered prayers last night. I believe I am hurting and am in need of help. I also want to take responsibility if writing my thoughts in a letter may project something that a phone call or a face to face conversation might not. I want to be honest with you about my feelings and did not want to wait three weeks to express them to you. I trust you will consider my feelings and concerns on these issues. Please let me know what you think. I am willing to wait until the next meeting to give you time to think and discuss these issues. Thank you. I love you and respect you all very much.

Love, Cathy

## Northern Federation Healing

Prayers were answered when a very successful meeting was held with Marty, Cathy & Cecil Wooten to reconcile relationships with Northern Federation leaders including Marty & Chris Fuqua, Reese & Mary Kay Neyland, Mark Mancini, Gregg & Cathy Marutzky, Tom & Etta McCurry, and John & Nancy Mannel. Facilitators of the reconciliation were Bruce & Robyn Williams, Steve Staten, Andy Fleming, and Al & Gloria Baird. They met for two entire days, March 24-25. The meetings culminated in repentance and tears – asking for and giving forgiveness by each of the brothers and sisters. Repentance is continuing, and the group will meet again in three weeks to help the godly sorrow result in total healing.

April 21, 2003

Dear Robyn,

Thank you for your email. I am glad you feel you can be candid with me. Thank you also for the time you and Gloria spent with me on Thursday. Although I came home exhausted, I felt we had a good discussion. I agreed with most of what was said. Regarding Friday night, I have no problem telling the Fuquas and Neylands what I have learned and am still learning about my parenting and about my life. I have made many mistakes. I meant every word I said and I am certain that my list wasn't comprehensive either. You asked in your email if I "don't believe I took part in the problem"? I must have really done a poor job confessing my sins for you to ask me that.

I still don't feel understood. But as we discussed on Thursday, people don't really understand without the accompanying experience, right, i.e., like Gloria's mention of Reese's response to my mother's death. Therefore, I suppose I can't fault you for not understanding how I feel. What has happened to me has not happened to you. I pray it never does. I believe you and Gloria want to understand. However, because there are a number of people hurting in the church, I believe it is important to project understanding and validation when they are hurting. People are grieving their losses. We must all do a better job helping those who are hurting to heal with compassion and acceptance. In those times especially it is more damaging that one feel judgment.

First, I wanted to address something you said on Thursday that you mentioned in your email. In fact, I feel better about what you wrote than what I heard you say. Perhaps I did not hear you correctly. At any rate, I want to be honest. I agree with you that Kip built a church with very serious foundational problems. As a leadership we were very competitive and position-oriented. It became difficult for people, especially leaders, to be open and to show any weakness. This has led to a host of other sins within the leadership. However, I do not agree with your statement that "if Kip had been a different leader, this would have been a different church". I think it is more accurate to say, "if we had all been different leaders, the church would have been a different church". I realize that many of us did not agree with Kip. Many of us were not heard. Many were disciplined harshly for speaking up. However, I feel we all saw it happen and therefore, we are all guilty of letting it happen. You are right all of us took part in it. This makes us at least as guilty as Kip. I would like to suggest that we are guiltier than Kip because we believed he was wrong and he thought he was right. We failed to bring about needed changes because we weren't open with each other, we didn't trust each other, and we were not unified as a leadership. I do not accept that there was nothing any of us could have done had we done it together. We all disagreed with him in our hearts (some louder than that) and basically ran our own ministries as we saw fit and tried to stay out of trouble with Kip. That was cowardly and wrong. While your letter acknowledges that we share responsibility for the building of the church, I wanted to share that your statement on Thursday came across in a blame-shifting way.

I heard Marty Fuqua apologize for not loving us the way he should have and for the way he disqualified Marty Wooten for the eldership without prior communication. He was quite right when he said it was disrespectful and hurtful. I accept his sincere apology and forgive him. However, I am still not resolved and hope to express why in my thoughts that follow. I wrote the Peacemakers after our last meeting about how I felt following the March 25<sup>th</sup> meeting and other concerns I have. Other than one comment you made to me about the letter on Thursday, no one else has addressed my concerns.

I left the January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting with Reese not resolved. It is unfortunate that no one else from the Peacemakers was present in the meeting with the Bairds. The Wootens were not the only ones at the meeting who were seeking resolution regarding Reese's alleged deceit. None of us left Al's house feeling that the matter was resolved. I can appreciate that Al feels resolved, however, Al was never unresolved with Reese in the first place, and hasn't in my opinion, assured us that he is open to any other opinion other than the one he already has. I appreciate Reese expressing regret that he didn't love us and that he recognizes he hurt us. I accept his apology and forgive him. However, Reese still projects the same

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defensive posturing he did in the last meeting. I still have not heard him admit or apologize for having had serious addiction (or addiction-like) problem and that he had been deceitful about it.

What completely floored me at the last meeting was hearing the NF perspective of the September 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. What I heard them say was that they communicated that Marty was disqualified only for the eldership, and not for all three roles simultaneously. Because Marty fought that decision (not submissive), they were forced to fire us a week later. Additionally, Tom McCurry said the NF email stating Marty was disqualified for all three roles was a mistake. Since they never disqualified him for all three roles to begin with, saying otherwise was simply an error. Thirdly, they claimed that Catherine was never made to be the issue/an issue. Did I hear that right? If so, I couldn't disagree more. This is absolutely not true. And at the risk of being a "bulldog" about it (Al's words), I am certain about it. Therefore, I am even more disturbed about the lack of honesty in the group than ever before. It is hard for me to believe Marty and I can convince you of this. After all, in our fellowship the "group" or the "leaders" are usually right.

I'd like to address your email. I agree with you that God has miraculously stepped in and is dismantling the "system". It reminds me of the scripture in Ezekiel 34. I am grateful for that, as I believe you are. I have trouble with several points in your email. First, you assume Marty is interested in becoming the "new one man show". Secondly, you accused him of manipulation by identifying what Reese and Bruce made clear in their statements about Marty on Friday night. They both said they didn't trust Marty to allow him to teach in the church. Bruce's reasoning was, "It is obvious Marty's thinking has evolved". That is true, our thinking has evolved. But it is not also true that Bruce's thinking has evolved. I believe both men have grown as a result of that evolution process. Thirdly, you mention that there are qualifications that exist for even evangelists that result in them being considered trustworthy. I agree with your assessment that we need to lead by example and that dialogue is important for relationship (trust). I believe the scripture you mentioned applies to members as well as evangelists. Both Reese and Bruce have stated that they do not trust Marty. Why? I respect your life immensely. I hope you respect mine. You say I should trust you. But you communicate as if trusting you is a piece of cake and imply that the distrust Bruce and Reese have for Marty is somehow reasonable. You want me to trust you when you don't trust me? That's a problem. Isn't that a part of the "system" that God is dismantling?

I told you and Gloria that I felt alone and abandoned by everyone and that I didn't feel protected. What took you so long to try to get this situation corrected? Al brought up the lawsuit scare after he apologized for not making this happen sooner. I am left feeling responsible for the delay, not Al. That is an example of turning things back on others. Nevertheless, it has taken a year for us to even get an audience and attempt to discuss with the NF how we feel we were treated.

A year ago, our daughter was judged and found wanting by this group of leaders. There was no compassion or attempt to understand the experience of rape. Instead, they shamed her. Their narrow-minded and sinful response is a stumbling block to Catherine. How many people have been treated sinfully by leaders? Sadly, this is not an isolated incident of unloving behavior from the leadership of our church. Have the abuses that have occurred at the hands of leaders become so commonplace that we are left without tears? Because they deny that Catherine was an issue, they deny responsibility for what they did to her. There are no tears because there is no responsibility and because we are numb. And yet, causing a "little one" to stumble is a serious offense to Jesus.

Your argument is that I have hurt Catherine more than anyone else has hurt Catherine by my failures as a parent or that Catherine's problems "go way back". I admit my sins and failures hurt Catherine. As long as I am in the flesh and remain her mother I will continue to hurt her. But I believe the issue regarding Catherine's attendance is that we have taught her to think for herself. She sees through the hypocrisy and the unbiblical parameters that we uphold in the church. I am not sure that Jesus would agree with your assessment of how the Kingdom should be defined, i.e., the sinful woman and Simon. John Mannel stated he considered Catherine a "fallaway" in April before anyone knew the facts. How can it be right for

leaders to sin and be given grace while a seventeen-year old rape victim is condemned? She doesn't want to be a part of a fellowship like this. I applaud her efforts to hold onto her convictions about what represents the kingdom of God. Perhaps I should refer you back to the specific sins that were confessed in the LA letter of apology by the leadership, i.e., arrogance, favoritism, etc. I appeal to you to be consistent. What happened to Catherine is an opportunity to take responsibility for sins already identified and confessed by this leadership.

You raised the issue of sincerity in your email. I believe you are sincere. You state that if we can't trust you, then maybe we shouldn't stay here. You have no idea how your suggestion that we should leave affects me. Your timing couldn't be worse or your suggestion more insensitive. Also, if everyone who doesn't trust the leadership leaves, how many would be left? Too many people have already left the church because of trust issues with leaders.

You say that you love the church in LA and that this is why you stay. You seem to imply that we don't love the church as much as you do and you question our concern for the brothers and sisters in the Central Region because we are not willing to write a statement when you want us to. Perhaps you don't realize that we have been in the Central Region for seven years. I believe they should hear the truth about what happened. I have always felt that. You say you don't understand "why we would not want them to see us work through our problems in humility". We certainly do want the Central Region to see us work through our problems in humility. But what has been resolved? And must I do this in your time frame to be viewed as humble? Marty asked for time to think about what he was feeling. I don't believe the Central Region needs to hear a preliminary statement before we are in fact "resolved". If Reese, for example, doesn't feel comfortable with Marty teaching in the Central Region, then let's table the statements until he does trust Marty.

I appreciate the LA letter of Apology. I thought it was needed and a good first step toward healing. Many people are looking for the fruits of repentance that need to accompany the words in the statement. I am sure you agree. However, many people don't believe it to be a sincere apology because many leaders have made many statements about many things in the past. And what really changed? I think they are weary of statements and prefer to see real change. Is it unreasonable to wait a little while longer before we make a statement after repentance has taken place? I am tired of the dishonesty and the games we play as leaders because we feel something must be done our way and everyone who is humble will immediately comply. If the Fuquas and Neylands have no conscience issue with writing a statement, then let them make a statement. (They need to correct some of the written statements they made about us anyway). I prefer to wait and communicate after repentance has taken place. Let the Central Region hear the whole truth. I have no problem with that. Instead, I feel accused of not having the interests of the church before my own interests or that my love for the Central Region is an issue with you. All of this left me feeling accused and judged. In other words, I felt shamed.

You stated that "the biggest change that needs to take place in the church is how we treat each other". I believe the biggest thing we need to change is the way we think, which has resulted in the way we treat each other. You are correct; God is dismantling the "system" we created. But until we change the way we think, until the judgement stops, until we stop assuming that the leader/group is always right, and when the standard is the same for the leader as well as the member, the abuses will continue to occur. The way we perceive, assess, process, and communicate is deep within each one of us. We are not objective about the system we built because we are a part of it. The "system" is inside of us, not something outside of us. Your email made that very clear to me, Robyn. I felt accused and judged and I don't believe you meant to do that at all. I may have left you feeling judged. This is what I mean that the "system" is still alive and in all of us.

I am thankful for your openness and for the opportunity to reply. You and all the other Peacemakers have sacrificed a great deal of time and effort. Thank you. Please forward this letter to them for their consideration.

Love, Cathy

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From: Cecil Wooten

April 21, 2003

To: Peacemakers: Al Baird, Bruce Williams, Andy Fleming, and Steve Staten  
cc: Marty Wooten, Cathy Wooten, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and  
Dave Graham  
Subject: Issue Clarification- March 25, 2003 Meeting

Earlier, after the March 25 meeting, when I informed Bruce and Al that I intended to write another letter on this subject, both asked me not to and I agreed, deciding to wait until after the April 18 meeting. There were several comments made in the March 25 meeting which I will address. I chose not to challenge various statements during the meeting because I wanted time to think through my concerns and did not want to hinder the process of obtaining resolution for Marty and Cathy Wooten.

At the start of the March 25 meeting, Reese made the statement that he thought all of his "addiction matters" had been dealt with in the January 7, 2003 meeting and resented my having provided additional information to be considered for additional discussion in the March 25 meeting with the Peacemakers. (See attached letter 3/12/03 to Al and Bruce). I replied that after the January 7 meeting was over, and before I left, I informed Al there were still some issues with Reese I felt were still unresolved. Because these issues involved Reese's conversation with Mike Leatherwood and Dave Graham in April 2002, he told me that any unresolved issues would be taken up at a subsequent meeting with them. This is why I wrote my 3/12/03 letter in order and to furnish Al and Bruce with the information I had already received in a letter from Mike and Dave. No previous meeting occurred prior to the meetings on March 24-25 in which we could discuss Reese's issues further. At the March 24 meeting, Al produced a letter from \_\_\_\_\_ stating that in \_\_\_\_\_ opinion, Reese is not an addict and that \_\_\_\_\_ did not remember making the statements to Dave included in Dave's letter dated March 6, 2003. Al stated because \_\_\_\_\_ recollection of his conversation with Dave did not agree with Dave's statements in Dave's letter or Dave's recollection of their (\_\_\_\_\_ and Dave) conversation about Reese, and because Al did not remember Reese's January 7 statement the same as I stated in my 3/12/03 letter, \_\_\_\_\_ testimony negated the validity of both Mike Leatherwood's letter and Dave Graham's letter and therefore, this issue could not be resolved. Dave Graham was present in the discussion on March 24, and although he does remember that \_\_\_\_\_ expressed concern for Reese, without the presence of 2 or 3 witnesses, this discrepancy could not be resolved. Also, Al admonished me for calling Reese a liar because "one lie does not make a liar". Since Al seemed to be so upset at my persistence, both in a phone conversation we had a few days earlier and during the meeting, I decided to drop the discussion at that time. Again, my primary concern was for Marty and Cathy. I did not want this issue to hinder the process of obtaining resolution for them.

Now for the issue clarification with regard to Reese:

Although others have expressed concern about Reese's "addiction issues", my concern has never been about "addiction issues" but about the pattern of his alleged lies. Several individuals have told me they felt Reese had lied to them.

Although there are several statements that Reese made that concern me, I chose to investigate only the following two alleged lies in an effort to establish the truth:

1. In the summer of 2000, when questioned by \_\_\_\_\_ about his use of chewing tobacco, Reese told her his use of Skoal was "causal only - once or twice a month on the golf course".
2. In the spring of 2002, \_\_\_\_\_ said Reese told him that he (Reese) had decided to get help from NY because they were better qualified than the LA CR group. Later when questioned, Reese denied having said this to \_\_\_\_\_.

After talking extensively with the \_\_\_\_\_ and Dave Graham, I met with Reese and told him what I had learned:

1. His use of Skoal had been daily for over thirty years. He had even preached from the pulpit with Skoal in his mouth. Therefore, what he had told \_\_\_\_\_ in the summer of 2000 was a lie.
2. He had lied to \_\_\_\_\_ about getting help from New York. Reese never followed through with the advice Mike Leatherwood and Dave Graham had given him regarding his addiction issues in their conversation with Reese in April 2002.

That night, I told Reese I did not see him a man of integrity, but thought him to be a liar.

After my meeting with Reese, Gordon Ferguson phoned me and suggested I turn all of my information about Reese over to John Mannel and let him deal with the issues. I met with John Mannel and gave him all of my findings regarding the two alleged lies listed above. Having received permission from the \_\_\_\_\_ and Dave Graham, I provided their phone numbers to John so he could follow up with them. John spoke with the \_\_\_\_\_ and discovered that Reese had lied to \_\_\_\_\_, however, he pointed out that alleged lie 1) above occurred prior to Reese's appointment as an elder. I commented that alleged lie 2) above occurred after his appointment during Reese's service as an elder.

After John's conversation with the \_\_\_\_\_, John later told me he had advised Reese he owed an apology to \_\_\_\_\_ for lying to her in 2000 about his tobacco use. Reese apologized to her. It was concluded by Al Baird in the January 7, 2003 meeting that: 1) Reese stopped using Skoal in the summer of 2000, (after \_\_\_\_\_ confronted him about it), and that Reese was a "serious user", and in Al's opinion was in sin, 2) Reese was a "casual" user of cigars (Reese said he stopped smoking cigars after Bruce Williams spoke to him about it in the beginning of the year 2002), and 3) Reese had indeed lied to \_\_\_\_\_ in 2000.

I asked John about alleged lie 2) above. He had decided not to call Dave and discuss it with him because Dave was "no longer faithful". Dave had left the fellowship of the New York Church, therefore, John considered Dave a fallaway and not a reliable source.

At the start of the January 7, 2003 meeting Al stated the guidelines for the meeting were that no issues would be discussed unless the situation involved those present in the room. Unfortunately, this meant that alleged lie 2) could not be discussed because Dave and Mike were not present in the January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Following the discussion about alleged lie 1) when it was determined that Reese had lied to \_\_\_\_\_, Reese began to discuss with \_\_\_\_\_ the details about his meeting with Mike and Dave when they were in LA in April 2002. I had talked to Dave in the summer of 2002 to find out if Reese had indicated to Mike and Dave that he intended to seek help from them as Reese had told \_\_\_\_\_ he intended to do. Dave told me that they (Dave and Mike) had suggested to Reese that he should seek help and offered to spend several days consulting with him if he would come to NY. Mike called Reese on one of his visits to LA in July 2002 in an attempt to follow up with Reese since their conversation in April, but Reese never returned his call. Reese said he got Mike's message but had not returned the call because he felt Mike was vague about the reason for the meeting and seemed to only want to hang out. With the background information I already had from Mike and Dave, I was particularly attentive to Reese's comments made to \_\_\_\_\_ before those of us present in the January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting about Reese's discussion with Dave and Mike. In the car on the way home, I asked Marty and Cathy if they understood Reese to have said "Mike and Dave didn't express any real concern about Reese's talked to \_\_\_\_\_ who confirmed that he agreed with our (Marty, Cathy, Cecil) understanding addiction issues". Marty and Cathy agreed that Reese had made this comment. Cathy had recorded Reese's comments in her notes of the meeting. According to her notes, Reese clearly stated that: 1) "Mike and Dave did not express any real concern", 2) "It was only a 30 minute meeting and I only mentioned it", 3) "I wasn't looking for help and they never suggested I needed help". The next day, I talked

to \_\_\_\_\_, who confirmed that he agreed with our (Marty, Cathy, and Cecil) understanding of Reese's comments.

After getting the same confirmation from Marty, Cathy, and \_\_\_\_\_, I called Dave in NY and requested that he and Mike each send me separate statements regarding their April discussion with Reese in LA. I sent Mike's 3/2/03 statement and Dave's 3/6/03 statement to Al and Bruce with my letter of 3/12/03, thinking it would be discussed at the March 24 meeting while Dave was present as per Al's direction as I understood it. Because of Reese's resentment, \_\_\_\_\_ letter, and Al's remembering Reese's comments differently, my letter of 3/12/03 was never discussed during the meetings on March 24 or March 25.

After the March 25 meeting, I gave a copy of my 3/12/03 letter to the following individuals who attended the January 7 meeting: Marty Wooten, Cathy Wooten, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. I informed them that Al did not remember Reese's comments the same way that I stated them in my 3/12/03 letter. Marty, Cathy, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ have each given me permission to state in this letter that each of them is in agreement with the statements included in my letter of 3/12/03. We understood Reese to be clear in his recollection of his April conversation with Mike and Dave.

Two witnesses, Dave and Mike, have provided statements that they did express real concern to Reese about his addiction issues in their April conversation. The statements provided by Mike and Dave agree with what they told me when I called Dave Graham in NY last summer. Their letters clearly express their concern for Reese and contradict the statements made by Reese in the January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Six witnesses, including me, heard Reese make these very clear statements which are contradictory to the statements provided by Dave and Mike. Although this information also contradicts Al's recollection of Reese's statements, I believe the evidence presented herein indicates that Reese lied again at the January 7 meeting. This lie, regarding Reese's conversation with Mike Leatherwood and Dave Graham, occurred before six witnesses.

I have diligently been following the instructions given in Matthew 18, trying to get this issue dealt with biblically. I first met with Reese, just the two of us, without obtaining resolution in this matter. I then brought in John Mannel and Al Baird, which resulted in partial resolution, i.e., the confirmation of lie 1) before several witnesses. The "Peacemakers" were then brought into the resolution meetings of March 24-25. Since Al had already determined that the issue regarding Reese's alleged lies is not resolvable, because no one from the Peacemaker group was present at the January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting (besides Al and Gloria Baird), and because Reese felt attacked by my letter of 3/12/03 and by my continued efforts to get to the truth and resolve this matter, Al was not open to discussing it further in the March 24<sup>th</sup> meeting with the Peacemakers. It is my conviction that the next step for biblical resolution is to "tell it to the church"(Central Region) and let the church decide. I also feel that resolution in this matter may shed light on some of the reasons Marty and Cathy Wooten were terminated by the Northern Federation.

Because the Central Region is in the process of appointing deacons, I think this should go before the church before final decisions are made.

Attached: Cecil Wooten Letter 3/12/03  
Mike Leatherwood Letter March 2,2003  
David Graham Letter March 6, 2003  
Cathy Wooten Notes January 7, 2003 meeting

To: Al Baird FAX 1-213-252-6230 3/12/03  
Bruce Williams FAX 1-949-551-4445

From: Cecil Wooten FAX 1-818-790-9943 PHONE 1-818-790-9941

Subj: Different Story

At the 1/7/03 meeting Reese Neyland made the following very clear comments relative to his conversations with Mike Leatherwood and Dave Graham:

- A) Mike and Dave expressed little or no concern about Reese's addiction issues.
- B) Reese felt the LA "CR" leaders had a much greater level of concern than Mike and Dave.

After the 1/7/03 meeting I spoke with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ about Reese's comments. Both said they had a different understanding about the level of concern of Mike and Dave. I then phoned Dave and informed him of Reese's comments and requested statements from Dave and Mike covering their concerns regarding Reese's addiction. Attached are the following statements:

- 1) Mike Leatherwood 3/2/03
- 2) Dave Graham 3/6/03

You have permission to distribute as you see fit.

To whom it may concern:

March 2, 2003

In order for the church to grow, God's word is clear that we must speak the truth in love. I want all the interested parties to know that in my heart of hearts I am endeavoring to write this in that spirit of love and truth in the hope that the church might be restored to the health that God intends.

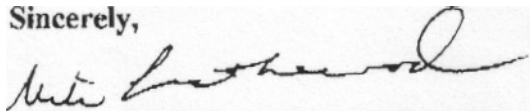
David Graham and I initially came to L.A. to help in evaluating Catherine Wooten for possible drug treatment. Immediately after that initial session with Catherine, Reese Neyland, the Fuduas, and the Mannels, Reese asked to meet privately with David and me in order to address some of his own issues. Reese admitted to having an addiction to smokeless tobacco during the time he had been serving in the ministry for the L. A. Church. He also discussed having formed a small support group of disciples without Marty Fuqua's knowledge in which he had begun to open up about his sexual behavior. Some in the group had become so concerned with Reese that they had taken some of these concerns to others outside of the group.

David and I did not do a full evaluation regarding the extent of Reese's nicotine use, but we were both concerned enough to recommend that he attend Will Ashley's CR group as a way of insuring that the issue with nicotine was really being treated and not just minimized and swept under the carpet. We also expressed alarm that he was keeping these things from Marty Fuqua. We suggested that the first thing he should do is tell Marty Fuqua everything. The first step in recovery is to admit everything with total openness and honesty. David suggested that he call Dr. Allen Berger, a psychologist who specializes in addiction and works in conjunction with the Betty Ford Center. We also suggested that it might be highly beneficial for him to come to New York for a few days where we could evaluate his situation more thoroughly. I made at least one other attempt to contact Reese regarding these issues, but he did not return my call. As far as I know, Reese did not accept our recommendation to attend Will's group or to seek further help.

As we got with Catherine over the next few months, it became apparent that her primary problem was a clinical depression and that drugs were being used in a secondary way to treat a deep sense of worthlessness, I was disturbed that in several discussions with Reese about Catherine's condition, Reese got very angry. The anger confused me at first, but over time e it has become my opinion that Reese's own undealt with issues were a part of his reaction in our sessions regarding Katherine. I believe the intent in enlisting us to come to LA was to give the Neylands and the Fuqua's justified reason to marginalize the Wootens' influence and to ultimately remove them from leadership as elders and GSL's.

I am deeply saddened and disillusioned, as I stated before, that Reese and Marty Fuqua would use their power and position to exploit Catherine's condition and manipulate our good intentions in order to achieve their own personal agenda. It is my opinion that the church would be better served by the resignation of both Marty Fuqua and Reese Neyland. I also believe that their souls might well be at stake unless there is a lengthy period of time in order for them to deeply evaluate their lives and motives as leaders.

Sincerely,



**Mike Leatherwood, MS, MSW, LSW.**

To whom it may concern:

March 6, 2003


I am writing this letter to confirm that I am in complete agreement with Mike Leatherwood's letter. I too am saddened and disappointed with the lack of love, compassion, and empathy shown for the entire Wooten family. Having been through 2 ½ years of my own personal recovery from drug addiction, I understand the denial, shame, guilt, anger, manipulation, confusion, and pain involved. It is not easy. I can only imagine how hard it would be for a teenager to go thru this process in an environment of condemnation and shame.

As Mike and I sat there with Catherine and listened to her story, both of us were moved to tears. We both felt her pain. I couldn't believe that men and women of God, claiming to be followers of Jesus Christ had treated her this way. There seemed to be very little understanding and much resentment held over from an incident that had happened 3 years prior. Jesus never shamed anyone intentionally. He told the truth, but with love, compassion, patience, kindness, and with a total desire to forgive. In fact, two-thirds of all of his teachings are on forgiveness. Without forgiveness, we buy into the shame and honor system and our religion becomes pure religiosity.

Brother Y [added] phoned Mike and me at the hotel in L.A. and told us he needed to talk to us about something very important. He came over and expressed his concern about Reese Neyland. He was a friend of Reeses' and was in the private group that Reese was involved with. He felt like Reese was in total denial about the seriousness of his problems. Brother Y had some strong convictions on the nicotine, alcohol, and sexual problems (addictions) that Reese was battling.

Mike and I were both alarmed at the apparent lack of true relationship within the group. As the months progressed, we found it unacceptable that nothing was being done to help the Wooten family. They were treated as if they had the plague. To my knowledge teens were advised to "be careful around Catherine."

Sincerely



David Graham

Draft 6

From: Cecil Wooten

April 27, 2003

To: Brothers and sisters in Christ, especially to the newly appointed deacons and the membership of the Central Region of Los Angeles International Church of Christ

Subj: Details of Marty and Cathy Wooten Termination from my perspective

I faxed my letter of April 21, 2003 (copy attached with certain names blacked) to Al Baird, Bruce Williams, Andy Fleming, and Steve Staten. I also called Jon Augustine to suggest that he might consider delaying the appointment of deacons and selection of ministry staff as I was recommending to the "Peacemakers" that information about Reese Neyland be presented to the church. Jon's response was: "You seem to be trying to smear my elder". After Jon agreed to keep the information confidential, I faxed him a copy of the April 21 letter.

Tuesday evening, April 22, Al Baird phoned to ask me to meet with him, Bruce Williams, and John Mannel Wednesday morning at 11:00 AM at Al's house to discuss my letter of April 21. We met for almost three hours. I was strongly advised not to take this matter to the church, as it would be divisive. It was suggested that I be humble, drop the whole issue, follow the example of Jesus in 1 Peter 2:23, and entrust myself to him who judges justly. I was told I am, in their opinion, vindictive, bitter, too emotionally involved to be objective, and not humble. I informed them that in addition to alleged lies discussed in my April 21 letter, Reese had told the Northern Federation D-Group (John Mannel Present) in June 2002 that his use of Skoal had been causal and that a brother, doing poorly spiritually, was trying to make a big thing out of nothing. John Mannel did not challenge that Reese had made this statement. Since Reese earlier, to some of the men in his family-D-Group, had admitted almost daily use over a thirty-year period, saying it had been casual use was false (lie).

I asked if I was expected to follow their advice and not take this to the church. Al responded that if I did take it to the church, he would oppose me. Because it was clear to me that all three were opposed, I asked Al how he would oppose. Al did not reply. Al suggested that I should be an example to Marty and Cathy and my grandchildren by being humble and forgiving. I said all I am trying to do is establish the truth. Al, Bruce, and John said that in their opinion the truth could not be discerned in this case. I replied, in my opinion the truth is supported by the evidence and I believe the individual member will be able to reach his own conclusion. Since this is a matter of opinion, my opinion is what I choose to follow. I am doing what I have to do to meet my own standard of integrity. When no one else would step up to help protect Marty, Cathy and Catherine, I committed to search for the truth. If I give up now, what kind of example would I be to my family? After telling the group I would consider their advice, I left the meeting. On the way home, I realized I am more like the persistent widow in Luke 18:5 "because this widow keeps bothering me I will see that she gets justice". Also, I am not the one being accused. Marty, Cathy, and Catherine are.

I was exhausted after the meeting and almost decided not to attend mid-week that night. At the last minute I got ready and drove to services. I was shocked when Jon Augustine announced that over the previous week-end it had been decided that Marty Fuqua would be named Central Region Leader and Reese Neyland Central Region Elder. I realized that Jon Augustine, Al Baird, Bruce Williams, and John Mannel all knew this decision had already been made while I was spending almost three hours trying to persuade them to delay making the decision until the congregation was provided the information from the Resolution Meetings. I spoke to John Mannel after services and told him I was very hurt and disappointed by their not telling me the decision had already been made. On my way home from services, I decided to "tell it to the church".

Since I feel some urgency in getting the information out, I am providing you copies of documents (with

Attachment 5 Page 1

certain names and statements blacked out) already in the hands of the “Peacemakers”. Included are the following which I suggest you read in the order listed:

- 1) My letter April 21, 2003 to Peacemakers
- 2) My letter 3/12/03 to Al Baird and Bruce Williams
- 3) Mike Leatherwood Letter( 2 pages) March 2, 2003
- 4) Dave Graham Letter March 6, 2003
- 5) Cathy Wooten Notes January 7, 2003 meeting(4 pages)
- 6) Al Baird letter 02/25/03
- 7) My letter February 14, 2003 to Al Baird and Bruce Williams (3 pages)
- 8) My letter Draft February 9, 2003 to Central Region (letter never sent)
- 9) Announcement from Harvey Woodford 02/04/03. Harvey is not responsible as the content of the announcement was provided to Harvey by Marty Fuqua, Reese Neyland, and Tom McCurry.
- 10) Tom McCurry letter 02/06/02 RE: Meeting on Friday September 13, 2003
- 11) Marty Wooten letter 02/06/02 RE: Meeting on Friday, September 13, 2003
- 12) Mike Leatherwood letter Sept 11, 2002
- 13) Marty Wooten letter 03/03/2002 RE: World Sector Elders’ Letter(2 pages)
- 14) Attachment B February 11, 2003 CA Wooten. I have been told this letter contains slanderous statements. Slander is to speak falsely about. As far as I am aware none of the statements have been proven to be false.
- 15) For Additional Discussion in the M
- 16) March 24 Meeting (4 pages)