

Tape 1 (Microcassette, in collection)

V. Boyd: Today is the 26th of October and I am interviewing Floyd Rose. Over breakfast he mentioned that his brother Marshall was asked by Willie Cato to speak one day in chapel when he was a student at NCI and Brother Keeble used to take him around to speak at different places after that point. And he even, after Southwestern, took a church in St. Louis and some other place then finally he moved to Toledo and has been preaching since then. He said Willie Cato was the only one that ever called him to preach and it wasn't the Lord. He hasn't been interested in preaching, in fact, he doesn't go to church anymore. His wife and children go, but he doesn't. He speaks a lot, but he doesn't preach for the church. [*Pause in tape.*] Floyd also told about the time he was at Southwestern Lectures and he was scheduled to speak after Lawford, Wells, and Billy Washington. They didn't want to have Floyd at the end. They wanted the prime spot and so they told Maxwell to rearrange the situation. And Floyd wouldn't participate in it. In fact he went up on the stage and asked them did they mind if he spoke last. And, of course, they were put on the spot and he did speak, but didn't try to attack them or play their politics with them, but he said those guys want to be big shots like Winston and Hogan and Steward. They are the "want to be's." [*Pause in tape.*] Floyd, what I'd like for you to do because I know it is a hot topic on your mind is, picture yourself twenty or thirty years from talking about the exciting events that are going on in Valdosta today. In other words, I want you to kind of condense. Pretend I don't know anything about what's going on in Valdosta. Start how it started, what's going on, some of the processes

Floyd Rose: Yes, I received a call one night, I believe, it was the third of September, this year 1998, inviting me to a meeting with a family. The father had just died while in the custody of the Lowndes County Sheriff's Department. As I understand it, he was driving on the wrong side of the street and was stopped by the police. And he was apparently drunk or had been drinking and the police handcuffed him and then as he was putting him into the car, according to witnesses, the police kned him in the back of his knee and shoved him over on his face and his head struck the curb. That happened twice. A woman across the street who saw it and saw the blood and ran out and gave a towel to the police officer – or the deputy sheriff it was – to sort of stop the bleeding. And instead of using it to wipe the blood from the face of Willie James Williams, whom he had arrested, he wiped sweat from his own face. And then two hours or 24 hours later, Willie James Williams was dead. Sheriff Ashley Paulk of Lowndes County said on the 4th of September that the prisoner had died from injuries that he suffered when he fell while resisting arrest and that his men had done nothing wrong. And nobody beat him. However, on the 15th of September the Southwest Georgia Medical Examiner said that Mr. Williams died from blunt force head trauma and he ruled his death a homicide. Meantime I accepted an invitation to attend a meeting to talk about it back on the April 5th or 6th. Interestingly enough, I'm sorry, September. Interestingly enough I had told my wife that when I moved to Valdosta that I would lead a quiet and uneventful life. I would not preach for another church, I would not establish another church, and I would not get involved again in the Civil Rights Movement. And so when I told her about the telephone call that I'd received and that I was going to a meeting and wanted to know if she would go with me. And she said, "No," and reminded me of the promises that I'd made. But I went on to the meeting and shared with them what my own skills were and my ability to galvanize people and to plan and to organize rallies, marches to dramatize our feelings. After all while issues are never resolved in the streets, they are resolved in the

seats, but sometimes you have to make noise in the streets to get negotiations in the seats. And so on the principle that issues get resolved when they are discussed and they get discussed when they get on the agenda and they get on the agenda when they get the attention of those who sit and manage the agenda. So we called for a mass rally that night. Surprisingly enough, my church seats about 300 people, and there were 650 to 700. Most of them couldn't even get in and a lot of people just left and they went on back home. They were all over the church and they all over back yard and out in the streets. And then we called for a march to send a message to the sheriff. And that following Saturday between 1500 and 2000 people showed up for the march. And we marched from the place where Mr. Williams was arrested and allegedly beaten to the Lowndes County Sheriff's Department. We had requested that he meet us there and give an explanation to the people and, of course, he declined. We then came back to the church. I guess that is the group that had organized this, came back to the church to talk and they asked me, "Where to do we go from here?" I said, "Well, I don't go anywhere from here. Because nobody elected me to lead them anywhere and I don't lead people where they or tell them or teach them what they don't want to know. So I that Sunday night someone placed my name in nomination. Alma Williams placed my name in nomination and it was seconded, not seconded. The preacher at the church, Wade McCray said, suggested that the nominations be closed on my name and there were no other nominations. And they asked me to lead the movement. I accepted their challenge with the understanding that Estelle, whom I call "Peaches," would go along with it. She prayed about it and decided that she would "stand by her man," as she put it.

And we then requested to have a meeting with the White ministers in the community. About twenty of them showed up. Incidentally one from the Church of Christ, who came in late – no White ministers from the Church of Christ, but one Black minister from the Church of Christ. And the meeting was for the White ministers primarily to solicit their support or at least to get them involved in some kind of investigation so the Black community could feel that this was a moral issue and that they had some concern about it. We received very little interest or support from them.

And then we requested to meet with the politicians. Out of sixty letters that were sent out inviting - and not only the elected officials, but the key people in the Democratic Party – to attend to talk about the issue. One White politician came, a State Representative. Another called to tell me that he was sorry, but he couldn't make it because he had to take his daughter to lunch, which, of course, insulted my intelligence and the intelligence of the Black community. His daughter could have had lunch with us. We were providing lunch. Of course, that just once again indicated to us that they believed in mind over matter. They didn't mind and we really didn't matter. [Chuckles] So when Mohammed doesn't come to the mountain, you have to take the mountain to Mohammed. So the next Saturday, we took another walk to the City Council and then to the County Commissioners. It was on Saturday and we didn't expect them to be there, but we left a message for them. And the following Thursday, we did go to City Council and there, perhaps as many as 300 to 400 people. The place seated about 200 and then another couple of hundred were out in the hall and down the steps and in the streets. We made our case before them. Although there is clear distinction between the jurisdiction of the city and the county and that Sheriff Paulk is a county official, duly elected. Our interest was in getting the White politicians in the city as well as the county to at least address the issue. If, as they kept telling me that it should not be a Black or a White, but just a right thing, then it was important to us for the White community to at least raise some questions about the difference in Mr. Paulk's contention that nobody beat him, but that he died of injuries that he received when he fell. And

what the coroner said that it was in fact a suicide. [*V. Boyd: Suicide?*] I mean homicide. And that's where we are now.

Let me, let me – it's not just, let me just be clear about this. This is not just now just about Willie James Williams. He was the third Black man to die under suspicious circumstances while in the custody of the Lowndes County Jail. Williard McFarland also died. Willie Jay Gay died. [*V. Boyd: Since what time?*] Since 1995, since Mr. Paulk's been the sheriff. It's not just about that. Mr. Paulk has fired fifteen Black guards. He has demoted several others. One man from captain to lieutenant and now to just a regular guard. Twelve Black current and/or former guards have filed race discrimination charges with the EOC, the Equal Opportunity Commission in Washington, D.C. against the Sheriff's Department. One guard, who was fired, was fired allegedly because he refused to participate in the beating of a Black prisoner by the White guards and was told by the sheriff that if he didn't, couldn't go along then he could go and flip hamburgers. In the meantime, I received a call from Johnny Cochran's office, Columbus office, out of Columbus, Georgia, from Attorney Joe Wiley indicating that Mr. Cochran was interested in the case and that his firm would take all of those cases at no charge to the families and represent them in all future litigation.

One young man, whose name was Avery Woods, was arrested, hogtied, and his head was used as a battering ram to force open a glass door and the glass shattered. This is when Larry McDougall, who refused to participate in that beating, in the beating of Avery Woods and that process and was fired. So it's not just about Willie James Williams, it's about, there are five guards that were forced to resign. And that's where we are.

V. Boyd: You mentioned that there was some dissention in the Black community. People have been trying to play that up.

Floyd Rose: Well, not within the Black community as much as one women. This is interesting. A Mrs. Alma Williams, who called me to get involved in this, and then Mrs. Alma Williams who also nominated me to lead the group, the next day when my picture was blasted all over the papers and obviously because I had been elected to lead the group, received the greater proportion of the publicity. She was suddenly in the background and all these, for years she had always been the person to get people together, but she was never able to create the kind interest, to galvanize the masses and hold them for any length of time.

Well, I left to conduct a revival in Franklin, Tennessee, and received a call from a news reporter indicating that she had come to his office and said that "Floyd Rose was in this for Floyd Rose," and that there was some money, she had some reservations about money that was being raised and what was being done with it. Incidentally because the movement had no name, no organization - it was just something that was just born - and the first rally was at my church and at the rally people were asking how they should make checks out, I just told them to make them out to the Church at Pine Hill and they would be placed in a special account until such time that an organization was formed. And incidentally that organization has been formed now. It's called "The People's Tribunal - a movement of the people, by the people, and for the people." Well, then, in the meantime, she, an upcoming march was coming the nineteenth of October, and she put out fliers asking people to stay away from the march and was raising all kinds of questions about my integrity. And I had told people in the beginning that there were two things that were very precious to me and for which I would give my life and one was integrity. I can't be bought. I will not be bought. I have been offered as much as a half a million dollars from a

drug dealer, who happened to be White, by the way, who was in prison in Cleveland, but he was going to be tried in Toledo and he wanted me to dramatize his case to get people together to walk. And I'd never do anything like that. I've been offered ten thousand dollars to not oppose the licenses of a business that was selling beer and wine to minors in the vicinity of my church. So that's important to me.

Well, my wife was hurt when she read all of this stuff in the paper questioning my honesty and integrity and the possibility that some money might be misappropriated because at my church and anything I'm involved in, every penny is counted and every penny is accounted for at my insistence. Obviously nothing had happened to the money, but just to plant that kind of seed, especially since I was relatively new in town and had been, had accepted this responsibility and we were getting the cooperation of churches and ministers all over the city, Black churches and ministers all over the city, with the exception of Churches of Christ. And then, so when I came home she was in tears, "Well," I said, "Honey, I'll tell you, if nobody shows up tomorrow," (This was on Friday.) then I'll just call it a day and I'll just let them have it because I didn't come here for this." And we were shocked to see as many people show up for that march as showed up for the first and the very next night, Sunday night, we had as many people, if not more, for that rally, then we had at the other. And Mrs. Williams came and she said on the front seat with her husband and when, during my presentation, I stopped and I thanked her for. I thanked her and I said, "If it were not for her, I would not be here so I owe her for that." I thanked her. Then I walked away from the podium and opened my arms to her and she came up and I hugged her and I said, "I love you." And she returned to her seat and, of course, the crowd stood and applauded. I was hoping that she would have said something or apologized in some way, but she chose not to do that, but it has not made a single dent in the movement. She is out there and maybe one or two others, I don't know who, but we're moving on with the movement.

V. Boyd: You mention she was a failed politician.

Floyd Rose: Yes, she had run for office twice and had failed. And in fact, let me step back a minute – following my election as leader of the movement, a few days later, she called a meeting of the group that had originally formed. And I went to the meeting and she was making some recommendations about what we ought to do next or whatever. I said, "Well, you know, nobody's been elected, but me, to do anything so I don't know what this is about. What gives this group any kind of legitimacy? You can't speak for those masses over there because they didn't ask you to speak for them." "Well," she said, "I didn't know that's what you were going to do." "Well," I said, "you know, I have to represent the people that elected me. You all didn't do that, they did. So I'm going to form an organization involving them." So someone said, "Well, you know, he's right. Nobody's asked us to do anything." "So I move," the man said, "That we dissolve this committee." That motion was seconded and that committee was officially dissolved. I went into her office and said, "I want you to just tell me what you feel. What's the real problem?" And she said several things at first, "Well you know, it looks like it's you and nobody, but you." I said, "No, tell me what's really bothering you." And she told me that, "I just tell you, Brother Rose," she called me, "I just don't take rejection well and I felt rejected. It seemed that once you were elected, you just sort of pushed us and me in particular aside." I said, "No, I need time to pray and to think about how we're going to do this, but we want to give everybody an opportunity to get involved, not just you and not just the members of this committee. And you will be asked to sign a card indicating your interest and commitment just

like everybody else and whatever your special skills are then we will look at that and involve you in that area. In fact, I had always thought that you would be the Mistress of Ceremony.” And she expressed surprise at that. Then she apologized and told me she just felt rejection and she said, “I just don’t take rejection well. I ran for office twice and lost and I was devastated by it. I even became so paranoid I asked my secretary” - or administrative assistant or whatever her title is, who happens to be my cousin’s daughter - “about her loyalty.” She kind of thought maybe I had been talking to her, but I haven’t spoken to her about anything and haven’t needed to. I hugged and we prayed. I thought that was the end of it. So I was shocked then when I got the call from the reporter. But be that as it may, the movement is strong and moving on.

V. Boyd: You mentioned a death threat.

Floyd Rose: [*chuckles*] Well, I got a call one evening. My wife answered the phone as she usually does and she inquires as to who’s calling and whoever it was didn’t want to say at first. She insisted that she get a name before she gave me the phone. Then she gave it to me. I said, “Hello.” And the voice on the other end said, “Well, this is the Klan and we’re watching you and you’re a dead Nigger.” And I kind of smiled and said, “Well, I love you too.” And he hung up. And he hung up and then I told my wife to dial Star 69 and if you do that, at least on the phones down there, you can determine where the call came from, if the phone is listed. And we got a number and then I called another friend and asked her to call it to see where the call came from. And she called back and said that she got an answering service. But we know the number. But that’s the only one that I really got.

V. Boyd: But that was very hard on Estelle.

Floyd Rose: Yeah, she went to pieces mainly because Estelle was in Toledo all those years. Although she was not directly involved in that, I was and most of the time I never told anybody, but because she was my secretary, I had a tape of calls and I just finally got to the place that I didn’t answer the phone. I let the answering service get it and it had all kinds of threats on there, but nothing actually happened. One time the threat was made to somebody where the police got it some kind of way. And the detective came to see me and said that they have to, by law, they have to tell somebody when a threat has been made on their life and he wanted to know what I wanted him to do about it. And I told him, “Nothing.” Because if you start talking about it and people know that it gets next to you then they’ll be copycats and all that. So I just ignore it.

V. Boyd: What do you think is going to happen in the next three or four weeks?

Floyd Rose: Well, I will probably be arrested before this is over. We intend to make sure that the people in Lowndes County and Valdosta don’t ignore this. We will do in the language of Mahatma Ghandi what we have to do to provoke the response that will get this issue resolved. My guess is, well, our next march will be from Valdosta State University. We are going to galvanize the students at that university and then we’re going to march to City, not to City Hall, to the Chamber of Commerce. We have already challenged the moral leadership of Valdosta and got no response through the ministers. We have challenged the political leadership and it has been relatively nothing. Now we’re going where the money is and we’re going to walk from Valdosta State University to the Chamber of Commerce, which is a seat of economic power in

Valdosta, to dramatize our issue. And if that is ignored we will escalate the movement by selectively boycotting certain business. And finally we will probably, if that doesn't work, football in Valdosta is sort of like apple pie in America is nationally. Valdosta High has been in the Number 1 spot, with few exceptions, all over the country. I mean on Friday nights, it looks like everybody in town goes to the football game. So our plans are to take several ministers and their wives and others who are willing to involve ourselves in what I call "an act of creative tension," civil disobedience where we will walk out perhaps at halftime or during one of the intervals and sit down in the middle of the field and not move until we are arrested and then the Black players will say, "We don't think we want to play tonight." And at that point, I suspect the national media will be attracted to that. And then I want to make sure that not a day pass, not a dinner passes by the White people in Valdosta not discussing this. And if they discuss it long enough and see that it is in their best interest to ask Mr. Paulk to step aside, they'll do it.

V. Boyd: Do you know that the Black players will go along with this?

Floyd Rose: Well, we would like for them to. If they don't, it won't really matter because they won't be able to play the rest of the game because we will be on everybody's mind, including theirs. But we have some reason to believe that the star players will.

V. Boyd: You mentioned that Paulk is a wealthy man?

Side ends

Tape one, Side two

V. Boyd: You mentioned that Paulk might be a wealthy man.

Floyd Rose: It's my understanding that he might be worth some fifty million dollars. I know he does not accept a salary for being sheriff and he lives in a mansion on top of a hill. But rich and powerful men have always bowed at the altar of truth. Somehow might gives way to right in the end and we expect that Mr. Paulk will step aside. If he does not, we will do one of two things. We will recall him. We will introduce petitions to recall him. And, of course, if he runs again, but that's two years from now – we can forget that. We do not intend for him to be in office two years from now. It's too long.

Let me be clear about why he needs to resign. If all of this happened on his watch and he still insists that his men have done nothing wrong then either he is blind to what's going on or he doesn't care what's going on. Either way that is unacceptable to us. He has a credibility problem that cannot be resolved. He said nobody beat him, he said, - Willy James Williams. He said that his men did nothing wrong. He said that he died from injuries he received when he fell while resisting arrest. The coroner said that his death was homicide. They can't both be right. Now even if the coroner comes back and says, "Well, I made a mistake." Then that will not repair the situation with the Black community because nobody's going to believe it. We are going to believe what he said the first time. And we think that independent investigation that is now going on by the FBI, sent out of Washington D. C., will confirm the findings of the coroner. And incidentally, they don't know this, but we have a witness, Dr. Joyce Joyce, who is [V.

Boyd: Joyce Joyce.] Joyce Joyce, who is head of the Black Studies department or African

American studies department at Temple University. She incidentally replaced Molefe Kete r Asante who is my friend, who incidentally used to be Arthur Lee Smith. She happened to be in Valdosta to attend her mother's funeral and her mother lived in that area. And after the funeral was over, you know, how people sit around late at night talking and kidding and carrying on. She happened to see the lights flashing of the police, of the sheriff. She went out to see what was going on. She said she was stunned by what she saw. She said she thought she'd never see anything like that. She thought all of that was over with. And she went and found Hoke Hampton, who was a member of City Council, and told him what she saw. And they told her to call me. And she called me after she got back to Philadelphia. And we are going to fly her back down there. But she saw it. She saw it. She said she saw what I said happened earlier, and that is, that the police, he put his legs between Billy Williams legs and kned him here between his knees and flipped him over on his head against the curb, twice. And yes, he was handcuffed, yes.

V. Boyd: So they were purposely trying to put him...

Floyd Rose: I don't think they were trying to kill him. They were trying to hurt him. There is a history in that jail of the police, it's a routine thing. They have what some people call a "goon squad." They put on black and they have on black gloves and they routinely beat prisoners into submission. Then they had a table, according to the *Post*, had a table, a steel table, where they fastened people to it for hours until they urinate and defecate on themselves. One man died while he was on that table. Yeah.

V. Boyd: This is all recent history?

Floyd Rose: All recent history. In fact the papers that I gave you, all that's in there. I tell you this, I don't know what's going to happen to me personally. To be honest with you, I don't expect to live, to die from natural causes. I suspect sooner or later something is going to happen unless they change because I will not move back. That's gotta change. In Valdosta, this has been going on for years and years. And the reason that people just came out of nowhere and are up in arms, not because of Floyd Rose, they were just waiting for somebody to stand up with courage and that could provide some kind of leadership. It had nothing to do with me personally.

V. Boyd: A long history, deeply entrenched now.

Floyd Rose: Yeah, yeah.

V. Boyd: Well, I don't have anything else to say on this. I can't remember anything else, but I wanted to at least get some of this down. I appreciate your giving me the papers. [*Floyd Rose: Sure.*] When we were talking before we were down to you and Jack and the debate that you had. That was, in the terms of church history, that was a biggie. Would you talk some more about that? I know that you mentioned the camaraderie that you had had surprised Butler and this kind of stuff- this NCI camaraderie, you had had. [*Floyd Rose: Still do.*] Talk a little more about that debate and the reaction of people.

Floyd Rose: Well, I wrote a book called *Beyond the Thicket*.

V. Boyd: And why did you write it?

Floyd Rose: Well, I had left the church of Christ mainly because I just no longer believed that the only people God knew where members of the church of Christ. I no longer believed that we had a corner on Jesus. I no longer believed that we were the only Christians. And I could not understand why if we were the True Church why it was that our schools and our churches were the last to integrate. And I just became disenchanted and decided I didn't want to be a part of that anymore. I didn't like the way we treated other Christians. We would accept invitations to preach in their churches, but we could not extend them the same invitation. And I got tired of lying about that. I would accept an invitation to preach and then someone would say, "Reverend Rose, we'd be glad to come to be with you sometime." And I'd lie and say, "I'm going to call you," knowing good and well that I was not going to call them although I wanted to. I knew that I couldn't. I just got tired of all that and decided I just wanted to be a free person. At the time I was holding somewhere between twenty and twenty-six Gospel Meetings a year. Very popular. But I was not really satisfied. So I just walked away. For almost a year, I did nothing. I'd go to the church, you know, and I'd give my money when I wasn't there at the Ridgewood Church in Toledo. And then finally I joined Cavalry Baptist Church and three months later we started a Family Baptist. Although, as I indicated earlier, it was a Baptist church, but it was really a non-denominational church in its practices, truly non-denominational. And I invited G. P. Holt to come and hold a meeting and he declined. I invited Kelly Mitchell and he declined. Franklin Florence and he declined. The only person that preached there was my daddy. He would come and he would preach, good old Church of Christ sermon. He'd preach.

V. Boyd: I thought you said Florence on one occasion...

Floyd Rose: He did my wife's funeral. [*V. Boyd:* Oh] Yeah. He never, and I made a note of that at the funeral. If my wife had been alive and on her knees, crying and praying and begging, the people who were at that funeral wouldn't have come, but now that she was dead and her hands were folded and her eyes closed, she could do in her death what she could never do in her life which meant that she brought church of Christ people to Family Baptist Church. And, of course, Florence did the eulogy. That was acceptable, but if she was alive, he couldn't. And that doesn't make any sense to me. But at any rate for fifteen years I was with the Family Baptist Church. And when I was about to retire and to move South, I returned to the church of my childhood. I thought things had changed. I thought that there was a new day - as the slaves used to say, "A new day a dawning." And that there was a freedom in our brotherhood that I did not know fifteen years earlier, but it's not quite there yet, except in some areas. It appears to me that the White churches, for the most part. Let me back up, the White churches in certain areas have progressed far faster than the Black churches in this whole area of being free in Christ. And maybe the rest of us will catch up. There are few Black churches that I'm familiar with and ministers who are changing, particularly the younger ministers who are going to school and who have been trained to think analytically and to study for themselves. And they're putting their commitment to Jesus above their commitment to the brotherhood. I'm happy about that, but it's a little slower, at a slower pace than I can accept. I have to move on.

V. Boyd: The background for the writing of the book, would you talk some more about that?

Floyd Rose: I just wanted to put into writing what I felt and I wrote *Beyond the Thicket*. I was talking to a minister of Cavalry Baptist Church, L.H. Newsome, and he told me that when he was a boy he lived on a same narrow farm that was surrounded by a thicket. And that his daddy and his mother told him never to go beyond the thicket and how dangerous it was on the other side of the thicket. And they instilled fear in him and he never ventured beyond the thicket. However, one day they were playing baseball in an open field and he was playing center field and somebody hit the ball and it rolled down into that thicket. And they said, "Get the ball, L.H." And he ran to the edge and he stopped. And they said, "Get the ball, get the ball, L.H." And while he went on slowly into that thicket and when he reached down to pick up that ball, he looked on the other side and it wasn't like his mother and daddy had told him. There were rolling hills, beautiful homes perched on the mountains, and there were rivers, just a beautiful place. And he went on through that thicket to explore the world beyond the thicket. And then I went on that to comparison in my life. Until I was forty years old, Vernon, I never had a friend outside of the Church of Christ. The barber, who cut my hair, was Church of Christ. Every dinner engagement I had was with Church of Christ people. The only encounter I ever had with them was when I would go to the store or something like that. So here I was on this side of a religious thicket and I was told people over there were all sinners and were all going to Hell and something was wrong them and to associate with them was somehow evil. But then when I looked beyond the thicket, I saw a whole new world that people were kind, just as kind as members of the Church of Christ. People were Christians. People were generous. They were all of the things that we claimed to be and said that they were not. And once you venture beyond the thicket, you are never the same. And that's where I, that's where I am now.

V. Boyd: What reception did....

Floyd Rose: Oh, okay. I wrote the book. I went to the Lectureship and had a copy of it and Jack Evans, somebody handed him a copy of it. And he saw it and, of course, he talked about it at the Lectureship. and then told people about it. It's out there, buy it. It's okay, buy it. And then he wrote a book, *Before the Thicket*, in response to my book, *Beyond the Thicket* and, of course, in his book, he indicated that I really never was rooted and grounded in the Truth. That you know, I did speeches and was admirer of Martin Luther King, etc, etc, but never really was a Gospel, Gospel preacher. And then he called me one day and asked if I were interested in discussing it. And I said, "I would be glad to, but not in a debate." I said, "I'd be glad to do dialogue with you. You can have a microphone and I can have a microphone and we can just sit and chat and let the people listen in." So he scheduled three. One in Terrell, Texas, at Southwestern, one in Toledo at Macomber High School, not Macomber, another high school there in Toledo, I'll think of it in a minute. And one at Brother Hogan's in Los Angeles. Well, when I got to Terrell to do the first one, in preparation for that night (I was staying at Jack's house by the way.) And he said he wasn't quite comfortable in doing like I suggested. He wanted to just do a formal debate. Well, I really didn't realize what that was until I got to the auditorium and he had all these books and his readers up there and traditional Church of Christ debate. So I was just sitting up there by myself and chuckled about it and I said to the audience right in the beginning, "I have neither the need or the interest to debate my beliefs or concepts, I'll just tell you what I believe. And you respond to it anyway you like." And so that's what I did. And when he'd get done speaking, I would always go over and reach out and shake his hand, but he would never come to my table to

extend his hand when I finished. And I made a point of doing that throughout all of the discussions. I think most of the people who came there, of course, they were partisan. I mean they were Jack Evans all the way. And one while, I was trying to talk and they hollered out and I just stopped and I said, "Now when you come to Toledo, we'll show you how to act like Christians. Nobody at Family Baptist Church would act like that." And, of course, that put a real damp on the audience and when it was over, you know, we went on back over to Jack's house and we were laughing and talking and kidding. And David Benfoot and others from Southwestern and J. F. Butler was there, he was just stunned at the camaraderie. Jack and I were and Jack and I are and Jack and I will always be friends. It has nothing to do with that. We went to NCI and established a camaraderie that will never be broken. I just happen to have some differences with him with respect to some of his beliefs and so does he with mine. Then we went from there and came to Toledo and had another discussion and then left Toledo and went to Los Angeles and had another discussion. We were supposed to have one in Nashville next, but he decided to just call it off. It wasn't

V. Boyd: What was the difference in the Terrell and the Toledo and the Los Angeles? Did it get better or did it get worse?

Floyd Rose: Well, you know what, I don't know. When we got to Toledo, there were about 1500 people there and it was my time to speak last. He spoke first, I spoke last. He spoke first and I spoke.... that kind of thing. In Toledo, it was my turn to speak last. In fact, I didn't get up, stand up until I got ready to close the presentation. And I just talked a little bit about what we had discussed and then I went on to say, "When you leave here and people ask you what did I say, you tell them..." Anyway I forgot. I'll have to read for you all of that stuff. Anyway I went on to say what we were doing in Toledo in opposed to what we were saying. And it had to do with all of the thousands of people we were feeding in Haiti and all of the stuff we were doing which I consider real ministering of the church as opposed to proselytizing Christians from other churches. I did indicate, the thing that got a big laugh was, I said that "Jack may be a better lawyer than I am, but I'm a better lover." But I wasn't talking about anything, except that lover in the sense that for years I used to read the Bible as a skilled lawyer trying to figure out how to best attack somebody. And then when I stopped doing that and I saw the Bible in a different light and I started reading it as a son who wanted to hear from his Father then my attitude toward God changed and my attitude toward my fellow man also changed.

V. Boyd: What was the debate's reaction in Jack? What changed or was there any progression of change throughout these debates? Did he say the same thing?

Floyd Rose: Oh yeah, the same thing, the same argument, the same thing. And I basically said the same thing until I got to Los Angeles. When I got to Los Angeles, I said, "Now listen, I've been through this. Let me just say, the Church of Christ ain't the same anyway. Right here, in Nashville, when I was at NCI, you would get sent home for going to a movie. When I came out here to hold a meeting with Brother Hogan, he and Bethel Smith took me to the movie." But I just started saying stuff like that. Nothing significant. It just illustrated that the Church of Christ isn't the same all over. He kept talking about thinking the same thing, being of the same mind and the same judgment, whatever. And we talked about baptism and I was raising questions about whether or not baptism, of the validity of one baptism had to do the administrator or the

subject himself. Of course while we all agree that the validity of one's baptism has nothing to do with the administrator of it. That's what we all will say, but when it comes down to it, if a Baptist preacher baptized you, he may baptize you for the same reason you say that you baptize someone else, quote, "for the remission of sins" – and you still got to be re-baptized as far as the Church of Christ goes for the most part.

V. Boyd: And Jack maintained that system

Floyd Rose: Oh yeah. And Jack also says you don't just have to know about the death and burial and resurrection, you got to know something about the Kingdom and all that before you're baptized. I don't buy that, I didn't buy it and still don't. A person doesn't need, a person should be baptized for one reason because Jesus said so. There is no better reason than that. Why do you want to do it? Because Jesus said so. What other reason do you need? I say you don't need another. And the remission of sins is one of the benefits of baptism. So that's what I believed then and what I believe now.

V. Boyd: Has Jack changed theologically from the early days that you knew him?

Floyd Rose: I have not noticed a change in Jack now. In fairness to Jack, I haven't been around him that much. I haven't, I attended one of the Crusades and I got to hear him speak once. I have not detected any change in Jack as far as the fundamentals teaching go.

V. Boyd: And your debates with him?

Floyd Rose: Nothing. Debates don't usually change anybody. Because they're not designed... Dialogue provides a forum of mutual respect where you say I want to learn, I want to really hear what you're saying and I want you to really hear what I say. And in those areas, where I may be wrong, I'm willing to step down. In a debate, a debate is designed, somebody's got to win. That's what it's all about. And then you become dishonest. And I've done that before and I didn't like myself and I promised God I wouldn't do it again. And that was right here in Detroit at Ford Avenue Church, there was a young man who came to a meeting that Paul Settles was holding for Daddy and he stood up and asked some questions. And Brother Settles sort of shoved him aside so he challenged him for a debate. And Daddy said, "Well, I'll let my son take care of you." And that was me. So I had Wells over for my court. He was preacher over at [name unclear] at the time. And we had two debates. One at the church where he preached and the one at the church where Daddy was, Ford Avenue. I think he was at the Church of the Living God or Church of God, Apostolic Faith or something. Anyway was baptism – whether you could get baptized in the name of Jesus, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I hate to talk about this because it's just so silly now, but it was important then. And here's where I became dishonest. I asked him was the ceremony something that you say or do. And he said, "Both." I said, "So what do you say?" He said, "You say in the name of Jesus." I said, "Read where that's what they said." And everywhere he went it simply said they were baptized in the name of Jesus. I said, "That's what they did. Show me what they said. That's what they did, show me what they said." Everybody was laughing. He'd read. I said, "Show me what they said. You're showing me what they did." He went on and got through with that, and, of course, he couldn't respond. Then it was my time to answer. Homer Black, at the time was the

timekeeper, whatever, he said, "What do you say when you baptize?" Well, I knew what I said, I said, "By the authority of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, I baptize you, my brother, into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Bah, bah, bah." But I didn't answer him. I said, "I say what I do." "Mr. Moderator, he's not answering the question." I said, "If I say what I do or do what I say, you shouldn't mind me doing what I say, as long as I do what I do." Or something silly. And everybody was laughing. He just stood there. "Now when you get through it all, why don't you tell me what you say?" Well, the only reason, I didn't tell him what I say because I knew I couldn't read that anymore than he could read what he said. I can't pick up the Bible and read where they said, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and" So anyway, I knew that I wasn't honest. My sister almost got into a fight with somebody from his church after it was over and I decided I would never do anything like that again, and except for the thing with.....And I wouldn't even do that now, I'm not interested in it.

V. Boyd: So the people who attended the debates between you and Jack, they were mainly Church of Christ?

Floyd Rose: Oh yeah. I don't know...

V. Boyd: Even in Toledo?

Floyd Rose: Well, my people came. I'll tell you something funny happened. I had a large church obviously. And I had nurses and ushers and all that stuff. So I had my nurses there and they provided the juice and water and whatever we needed for both tables. And they came and I, said, "Be sure and give Dr. Evans some juice or whatever he would like to have." And they did. And after, when Jack really got started in on me, one of the nurses walked up to me and leaned down and said, "Do you want me to put something in it?" [*Laughs*] That was really funny. She was kidding, of course. But, of course, we didn't lose any members behind it. Didn't expect to and I don't know, if he gained, he didn't get them from my church.

V. Boyd: People just didn't buy anything that Jack was saying.

Floyd Rose: Oh no. One of the things that I think that was perceived that Jack may have won the debate, but he didn't win the people. You know, Jack is rough and all. And you know, I'm sort of another way than that. And I just had fun. After each one of them, I'd wade out into the audience and hug people and everything. It was always Floyd Rose. They bought the books and everything. And then they had my book in the library, but when I got down there by 1994, I said, "What happened to my book?" "Well," Ben Foster told me, "We took that out of the library." I said, "Why? I thought you all said that ...for the debate. I thought you all had them in the library." Well, those young students, you see, don't buy all that they're selling. They didn't then and they don't now. And the young men now who came here are the young men who came to Toledo that is, and to Terrell, and to California are the young men, who call me now, who didn't buy it then. And after I returned to the Church of Christ, they have become my.....

Tape ends.

Tape 2 (mini - cassette in collection)

V. Boyd: Tape 2 with Floyd Rose, 26th of October and we're talking about the debate that he and Jack Evans had. These friends that you're talking about, do you want to name some names?

Floyd Rose: Jerry Taylor, Ken Green, I don't know whether [Mundaisy-spelling] was there or not. I 'm not sure he was there. These are young men who are really searching and seeking now along with.... Let me get back to some of those, I'll get for you. Guys like Barkley and others who have not really come forward to challenge the system that is. They don't buy it. I know they don't buy and they know they don't buy it. Daniel Harrison, Franklin Florence Jr and Sr. We used to talk all the time. David Lane used to come to my house in Toledo and stay three days at a time and we'd share tapes and all that from Baptist preachers and others. Billy Washington. That's their livelihood. It's important to them that they have some kind, I guess, control over the brotherhood. But in their heart of hearts they know that the days are numbered for that. It's on its way out. Period. I expect ten years from now, nobody will be preaching that. When I say that, I mean that the Church of Christ brotherhood is the exclusive body of Christ.

V. Boyd: What would happen to Jack, who's kind of rigid?

Floyd Rose: Well, if he doesn't change, he'll be on the sidelines. Vernon, we are losing people. Now there are a few areas of the country where the Church of Christ may be growing slowly. A few congregations that are big, but for the most part there are fewer members in the Church of Christ now, in most areas, than there were fifteen, twenty years ago. And I think, I don't know a single ... Can you imagine in your wildest dreams sitting down talking to a graduate of some college, who has been trained to think for himself, to sell him on the idea that the Church of Christ is the exclusive body of Christ and you're going to Hell if you're not a member of that group? Nobody is going to buy that anymore. That's over. Everybody is changing now. Everybody, except us, and the Jehovah's Witnesses and may be one or two others.

V. Boyd: But Jack isn't stupid. Why is he so rigid?

Floyd Rose: Oh, I don't know, but Jack, Jack has never been... Now when you talk to Jack on the one and one, he's a different person than he is when he's performing. When I say performing, if he's in a debate or anything, but now on the one on one Jack's a different person. I don't know why. I just think that, somebody I guess thinks like you've got to maintain the status quo and maybe that's his calling. I don't have the slightest idea. Some of it I think he genuinely believes, but I don't see how anybody can really believe in their heart of hearts that the Church of Christ brotherhood that we know is the exclusive body of Christ.

V. Boyd: Would you talk about your going into the school system in Toledo and that transition? I know that you were going with Shiloh and Rod, etc, but that kind of fizzled when you went back to Toledo. You want to pick up?

Floyd Rose: Well, I decided after I started, after my views changed, the meetings that I was receiving all over the country obviously decreased in significant numbers. So I decided to take

care of my family, one. And I took a job as director of human relations for the Toledo Board of Education.

V. Boyd: How did you get that?

Floyd Rose: Well, incidentally, the man that's the mayor of Toledo right now [*Carter Thinkbeiner— name unclear*)] had received from the Toledo Jaycees as Young Man of the Year and they discovered that he had falsified some documents and made some claims that were not true and they took it back from him. He came over to my office one day. I was, at the time the director of a Southwest Center, some kind of a community center. I had just gotten that job. I'd had that job for about a month. And he was sort of crying on my shoulder in a sense and in the process he told me about this job. He said it paid \$16,000 a year. Well, at the time I was making about \$9000 a year. This was in 1969 or maybe '70. And he said, "They would hire you." I said, "Why do you think that they'd hire me?" "I just think that they'd hire you." So I just had my resume done by the professional secretaries downtown at a place they called "Proficient Secretaries." I was one of 33 people that interviewed for it. All of them had a Masters or above. Some of them had their doctorates. I just had two years from Southwestern and six months at McMurry. But I was interviewed, along with everybody else, by a panel of some sixteen people. They were presidents or vice-presidents of various community organizations, including the Fraternal Order of the Police, the NAACP, and everything in between – the Junior League, the League of Women Voters, the Board of Community Relations, etc. Then when the process was over, they submitted my name as the top name. And they submitted three names. You had to submit three names with their preference, and of course, I was their preference and got the job. They recommended me to the superintendent and he hired me.

V. Boyd: Mainly your speaking ability?

Floyd Rose: Well, that and my ability to work with Whites and Blacks. I could speak to both groups. When they did ask me a question and said, "What would you do if riots broke out in the school?" I said, "Well, I don't know what I'd do. What would you do? Nobody knows. I can't sit up here and tell you what I'd do." That got a laugh. Everybody else had told them what they'd do. They didn't know what they'd do. That's crazy. [*Laughs*] I'm not going to tell you. I don't know what I'd do. It was interesting thing. There was a little woman in there named Amelia [*name unclear*] who had a cute hat on during the interview. Of course, it didn't match her dress, but anyway it was a nice looking hat. And anyway I made the comment. They kind of rushed, McKinney, who was chairing the meeting said, "Reverend, we're running a little late, can we get started?" I said, "Just a minute. I just want to say something to her." I commented on her hat and told her how pretty it was. I told her my mother would, I mean my wife would love that. Of course, she smiled. There was no way she wasn't going to vote for me, you know. Later, somebody commented on it and said I took advantage of her. I said, "No, she needed a compliment and I needed a job. She got what she needed and I got what I needed." [*Both laugh*] And so for 25 years I did that and I wrote a book, the only manual in the nation for human relations, a guide for human relations and a human relations course. I did that. I wrote another book called *I Can Do It* which was designed as a motivation course for junior high kids. And during my tenure as director of human relations for the board, I negotiated disputes between parents and teachers and sometimes between teachers and teachers, etc. Negotiated on behalf of

kids who were pulled out of school, to reduce sentences or to get them back in school with the understanding that I'd give them some counseling, etc. And one thing I'm proud of, Vernon, after I left Toledo and was gone three years when the teachers and the Board of Education, the teachers were on the verge of striking back in April. Representatives from both sides asked me to come back. And I said I'd come if neither side paid for my trip. You've got to get somebody else to pay for my trip because I wanted to make sure that I maintained my independence and integrity. And I came back and spent three days in Toledo. Got on a plane and went back and the strike in Toledo averted. I'm proud of that only, and I don't take credit for settling the strike, I'm proud though of the fact that both sides at least respected my integrity and believed that I was "straight up with everybody". And that's always been important to me.

V. Boyd: Well, you've described some of the functions of that role, what are some of the highlights in that career?

Floyd Rose: Well, to be honest with you, I didn't, after the money got funny, you know the government paid so much. I started out with hundred seventy-five thousand dollar budget. Had human relations teachers under my direction. We set up human relations classes in all of the public high schools and human relations clubs in the junior high. I'd bring in people like Rod Spaulding to do workshops for these people and train them in sensitivity, racial sensitivity, etc. But [*V. Boyd:* Obviously the city was going through some of that.] Oh yeah, back in those days, everywhere. You know schools were falling apart Fights breaking out all over the place between Whites and Blacks. But after all of that subsided then the government cut the funds. They held onto me, but the program itself was never the same. It was reduced from that to my simply negotiating and mediating disputes, etc. But during those 25 years, most of my time outside of the Board of Education had to do with the community and my being president of the NAACP. I started Family Baptist church. I had a licensed agency, real estate business and a paralegal business and all that before I left.

V. Boyd: Tell me more about these things. How they got started and what was the nature of your involvement?

Floyd Rose: Okay. Well, the way I got to be president of the NAACP, the mayor appointed a White man, city manager, brought in somebody and there were two assistant city managers that were Black, and he didn't even give them the courtesy of an interview. And one of them had to train the White man that was hired to show him the ropes and I just got angry about that and asked people to meet me downtown. And I didn't know how many people would come, or if any. As it turned out, some 250 people showed up. [*V. Boyd: You're on the radio?*] Yeah, I'm on the radio and that's how I asked them to come and 250 people showed up. And the Council Chamber seated about 100 and, of course, they were all around the walls and in the halls and I challenged him and he sat there very quietly and he listened very respectfully. And when I finished, he said to me, "Reverend Rose, would you join me in my office?" And I said, "Sure." We left, walking together. He didn't say anything to me. I didn't say anything to him. We walked down the hall, got on the elevation. He didn't say anything. I didn't say anything. Got off the elevator. Went through area where the secretary was. She spoke and he still didn't say anything. We got inside and he shut the door and sat down and I sat down and he cursed me out. And said, "You don't speak and the forty or fifty people that run around with you don't speak for

the Black community. The NAACP speaks for the Black community. Do you understand that?" I said, "I hear you." And he said, "You came down here and got a piece of my so and so and you're not going to get away with it." Blah, blah, blah. The mayor. Nobody was in there, but me and him. I learned a valuable lesson. I don't go into any politician's office by myself now, period, as a matter of principle. So I got up and I extended my hand. He refused to shake it. I went on back to the church that I had just started, Family Baptist Church, and I told them exactly what he said, except the curse words. And they got a little upset and they organized. I had never been a part of the NAACP before, except I had a membership, a ten dollar membership, and I had been doing that every year. And the election was just a month away and I walked off with the presidency. And I called him up and said, "Well, you said that the NAACP speaks for the Black community. I'm it. Now what?" He didn't say anything. Then I called the chairman of the Democratic Party and told him that we needed to have lunch. Met with him. And I said, "You'd better get you another candidate. He's not going to win next time." He laughed, but his candidate lost. And we determined the outcome of every election until the time I left there.

V. Boyd: Did you ever see him later?

Floyd Rose: Oh yeah, we talked later. What did it, we put together what is called "a mini-convention." We invited a representative of each candidate to come and speak and then a straw poll was taken and the Republican candidate, a woman, White woman, won fifty-one percent of that vote and that translated into the general election two weeks later. And forty-seven percent of the Black vote, for the first time in Toledo's history, a mayoral candidate got more than ten percent of the Black vote, Republican. And she won. And then she had the nerve to have me arrested when we took over council chambers when they fired a Black man unjustly and then she lost. Lost badly. [*Chuckles*] Right is always stronger than might and in the end truth will win. And both times, we were right on the issues and both times we won.

V. Boyd: What are some of the other accomplishments in that role? You seem to have gotten your money out of the human relations with that kind of [*word unclear*] background. More things that you are doing with the NAACP and the church, these are taking more of your time. Is that right?

Floyd Rose: Yes, the, during the end, Vernon, I was at the Board of Education, but I was given fewer responsibilities primarily, I think, because they were uncomfortable with me being that too because of all of this other publicity I was generating out here. And then people were calling and complaining about me. "How do I find the time to do all this other stuff if I have got a full time job with the Board of Education?" Well, the truth of the matter is I had an hour for lunch so if I called a news conference - if I didn't feel the need to call it early in the day - I did it between 11:30 and 12:30. Well, when you're on the evening news, nobody knows when that is. Okay. And then, of course, there was Saturday and there was Sunday. You can always do news releases whenever you wanted to. The only thing I was asked not to do was hold a news conference at my office at the Board of Education. And I had done that one time. The reporter from Detroit had come over to interview me for something and I had it there because it was ten o'clock in the morning and I didn't want to be away from my job. At other times, I had what they call "comp days" and I would request time off. They didn't know what for. I'd just request the time off if I needed to make a statement at another time.

I guess one of the things that I'm most proud of is that while I was still President of the NAACP we were able to sign Fair Share agreements with several corporations and a construction company. We signed an agreement with the Northwest Contractors Association that produced almost 50 million dollars for Black sub-contractor businesses. We also signed Fair Share agreements with local department stores. They agreed to hire Blacks in direct proportion to their Black trade. If forty percent of the trade was Black, we got forty percent of the jobs from the top to bottom. I was proud of that. And, of course, the establishment of the Save Our Children's Scholarship Fund.

V. Boyd: But to get those agreements you just talked about didn't come easy?

Floyd Rose: No, no, you know, you have to learn how negotiations and how to do that and to have people on your team who knew how to do it. We were just fortunate to get that done. I don't know, people would see me on television and they would always take a 30 second sound bite. And I sound angry. I sound tough and all that. But then when we were going to a meeting, you know, another picture evolved and people would be surprised because I didn't sound in the meeting like I sounded before, you know, several hundred people. And so we always walked away with something. Now it might have taken time to get there. For instance, at TU, they were building, at Toledo University, there were building a building out there and not a single Black person was on the site. And that was unacceptable. And so they didn't want to talk about it. And I said, "Fine." So I took some dump trucks out there, blocked the entrance so they couldn't come in and nobody could get out. And then I just sat there on the bumper of my car waiting on them. And then a lawyer came up and wanted to talk. I said, "Yeah." He said, "Can we talk about moving the dump trucks?" And I said, "No, we can talk about putting some Black folks out on the site and if you do that the dump trucks will automatically be removed. You've got to get rid of the cause before you can deal with this thing." "Well, just a minute." And he went and talked to somebody. "Well, you have to move the dump trucks." I said, "No, no, we're not going to move the dump trucks until I get some commitment about the jobs." He went back and then they called the police. And the police said, "No, this is not our issue, it's the issue of campus police." I said, "I'd be glad to be arrested, but the trucks are not going to move." When it was over, they went back and they talked to somebody else. I said, "Well, they have to make a commitment that we will have the people on the site Monday." This was Friday. Monday. We got them on the site Monday before I was to move the dump trucks. So I went to the phone. The guy committed to that and then we sat down and spent the next five or six hours in negotiations and out of that came all kinds of jobs. But you have to get the attention of the people who set the agenda before you can get issues discussed and that's what happened. And several things happened like that. They were constructing another, Taco Bell owns – I can't think of this thing. They went out of business here lately. They were building a building right in the heart of the Black community and Black folks were not getting any money out of that. Not a single Black person was working. So all of that was just not acceptable when I was there. The same thing happened and we stopped the job until we sat down and talked about it. And they flew in somebody from Boston or somewhere and we put it together.

V. Boyd: This is the kind of strategy that Dr. King used to do.

Floyd Rose: Sure, and Gandhi, right.

V. Boyd: And Gandhi, yes. I used to hear Jesse Jackson talk in terms of economics. That was kind of his bag. Dr. King has kind of [unclear] operations and stuff. Is that the source of your inspiration?

Floyd Rose: King, and Gandhi, and Mandela. But basically Gandhi and King, I studied both of their lives and history. In fact, King got his method from Gandhi. He was the original architect of civil disobedience and boycotts and the like. If you don't have the political power, you have to resort to the only power left that you have. And you don't necessarily, you see boycotts are both legal and lethal. Whites who sympathize with your cause, who would never walk with you in the streets, will stay away from the store. So they don't and the White folks don't know whether their boycotting or just don't want anything out of the store. The end results are the same. They lose money. And in this country that's what White people are primarily interested in – money. If you stop the cash register, you're going to get their attention. That's how I know how this thing is going to come out in Valdosta. Mr. Paulk's going to end up stepping aside. [*V. Boyd:* What's his money?] His money, no, the White people who need our money will insist on him stepping aside.

V. Boyd: I see. He's a wealthy man.

Floyd Rose: Oh no, he own an electric company there. Somebody told me the other day though that he's put all that stuff in someone else's name. I think he fears that he is going to be sued and he is going to be.

V. Boyd: What was the revolution that brought you back to the Church of Christ?

Floyd Rose: Well, you know, I'm not sure the revolution, except in the sense. I was getting ready to go to...I was tired and I decided. I had gotten to the place, Vernon, where I couldn't go to the store. Couldn't hardly go out of my house. Not out of fear, but the demands on me had become so overwhelming because once you become known by everybody and you accomplished things that everybody know you've accomplished. They think that you can help them, everybody. And so they overwhelm you with requests. I'd gotten where I didn't go out of my house, except to church. If I needed something from the store, I'd send somebody and that wasn't a good way to live. So I decided to just take a leave, to take a sabbatical. I said, "Well, why don't I go down to Southwestern." And I was also preparing also to write. I was just going down there to spend some time to write a book called *The Black Church*. Something, what happened to it, I've forgotten now what I was going to do, but anyway it had to do with the Black church and I wanted to do a history of the Black church. Well, not the Black Church of Christ, but the Black church in general. And then I decided that I was really not coming back to Toledo. Nobody knew that at the time, but I wasn't coming back. Because I had already bought my retirement home in Valdosta. And I said, well, if I'm coming back, I don't know Baptist people or anybody else outside of Toledo. Only Church of Christ were the old friends I know. And maybe I can help change things. And so I returned. I didn't return because I thought I was going to Hell if I didn't go back. That had nothing to do with it at all. I want to make that clear. I returned because it was the church of my childhood and I thought maybe I could be helpful in changing things. In fact, I was already getting calls from preachers who want to talk, you know,

about things. And I went back. And I went back in Chicago because Frances, who is my cousin, Dan's wife, every time she'd see me – she was one of those who never said anything to me about when I was coming back and “don't you know you are wrong” and all that. All she would say when she would see me was, “I love you.”

V. Boyd: Frances?

Floyd Rose: Frances, she's Dan's wife. [*V. Boyd: Okay.*] I went to Chicago and went back to the church. Now Vernon, here's what surprised me - I didn't expect anybody to ask me to preach. I'd lived my life, I thought, you know. When I got to Chicago, before that Sunday morning, Jewell Hutton called and [*name unclear*] he asked if I would preach for him that night. I said, “Well, yes.” So people were all in the aisles and everywhere. The place was jammed. He had announced it and it had kind of got out that I was going to preach my first sermon back in the Church of Christ out at Harvey and I did. Within a month, I had received eleven invitations to do meetings, plus invitations to speak somewhere every Sunday. I think the first Sunday we went to a church that was broken, I think we talked about that. And I was shocked by that. I didn't think anyone would want to hear me preach. And then after the reception was what it was, well maybe.....

End of side 1

Tape 2, Side 2

Floyd Rose: I don't remember where we were.

V. Boyd: Well, talk about your reception.

Floyd Rose: Well, I came back. I came back in Chicago. I was at Daniel Harrison's church. He's married to my first cousin, second cousin, I believe, Frances. Frances, every time she would see me she never condemned me. She never questioned why I left the Church of Christ. She just would say, “Floyd, I love you.” And so I decided to go back to Chicago and return. And I did. And received a call from Jewell Hutton that morning even before I preached and inviting me to preach at Harvey, the church where he preaches, a suburb of Chicago. And I accepted and, of course, the place was crowded. People were all around the walls and in the aisles, a warm and wonderful reception and to my shock within a month I'd received invitations to speak and to hold meetings for eleven congregations across the country. And invitations to speak at a different church for at least a year. And I was shocked by this. I never dreamed that I'd have this kind of reception. My popularity it appears has skyrocketed since then. In 1997, I was in 30 different pulpits in as many different cities, either doing meetings or workshops or special sermons. And it's been like that ever since. I am accepting invitations now to more congregations among White Christians than ever. And that, of course, is due to a great extent because I received an invitation from you to speak. I know, but that's what happened. That's the truth. After I went to Oakland two or three times, the invitations started coming from several places, including Abilene Christian University [*V. Boyd: unclear*] Oh I don't know.

V. Boyd: ... Substituted down for your buddy and they heard you and they called you back.

Floyd Boyd: That wall, okay, that wall, but the one out at, up here at [*V. Boyd:* Lake Geneva.] Lake Geneva, right, [*V. Boyd:* Got you two invitations.] Okay, right and the one had to do with Fresno, California and, of course, I also know that the invitation that I got from the college here came as a result of the people who came to hear me when I was at your church too. That's not accurate either? You've done so much that I get it confused, I do know that. But anyway I'm really please about that because for years, except for Marshall Keeble, the White churches invited very few Blacks to participate. I'm not sure how many are doing that now. But I know I never got any of the invitations and I'm pleased about that. Where were we?

V. Boyd: Well, just generally on this reception back into the church. What have you perceived as different then maybe what you didn't expect or is different? I know that theologically you've said that doors have been a little bit more open. [*Floyd Rose:* Yes, yes.] Any other reflections?

Floyd Rose: Well, well, now I have always had the highest respect of the masses of Black people in the Churches of Christ. I have always had a wonderful reception. A few of the ministers, who didn't quite like me back then, don't now. When I say like me, they have had whatever problem they felt they've had with accepting me, namely Roosevelt Wells, Eugene Lawton, perhaps David Lane, Billy Washington, that group. I wasn't popular with them fifteen, twenty years ago and that has not changed. I never received one call from either one of them saying, "We're glad your back. Welcome home, Floyd" etc. But for the masses of people in the Black Churches of Christ, they've been warm and wonderful. There is a developing group of young Black preachers in the Church of Christ now who are fed up with things as they are and want to change. And as time goes on, I suspect ten years from now there will be a total revolution in the Churches of Christ among the Black brethren. Our approach to the message of Jesus will be totally different. Gone will be this old idea that 'everybody is going to Hell, but us' idea. We will step down off of the judgment seat and sit on the love seat and everybody is going to better for it and the church will begin to grow again.

V. Boyd: But the rigidity of Jack doesn't seem to change and to many eyes he's top dog.

Floyd Rose: Well, because he is president of Southwestern Christian College and that's a unique position to be in. Jack doesn't have a church obviously and he's president of that school and that kind of gives him this special edge. And he's developed a reputation as a great debater and so that strikes fear in some preachers – not me of course. And I think that will lose. I don't think Jack intends to represent that. I don't think Jack does that for the purpose of control, but that is always the results of it because Jack has a very dominating personality and he challenges everybody and everything. Some people just cower to that rather than to be mobbed by him, they just go along, so they can get along, but it's been my experience that people who go along to get along don't get along far. That's always short lived.

V. Boyd: But that affects the support for Southwestern and is still alive. Any Christian School is desperate for money to survive. I understand that. It's always a fund raising effort, but I wondered if Jack's theology is having an effect on....

Floyd Rose: Well, it's just like Abilene Christian and David Lipscomb, years ago, the hardliners, the most conservative Christians, were the people who were the most liberal toward those schools. So you end up catering to those people who support the school. The people who are the most liberal in the Churches of Christ among Black ministers are the least supportive financially of Southwestern Christian College. So the support of Southwestern comes from the hardliners in the Church of Christ. They're the ones who are going to have the bake sales. They're the ones who are going to have the fund raisers. They're the ones because they've been led to believe that if Southwestern does not stay open and if it does not produce these preachers, the preachers that have the "sound doctrine" quote, end of quote, won't be along and the church goes the way of every other quote "denomination."

V. Boyd: Yeah, I know. I know the theme. [*Rose laughs.*] And you don't see any hope on the horizon regarding Southwestern?

Floyd Rose: Well, I don't think that the students who go there now believe all of that. I was down there for about nine months and I was asked to speak one time and that was the end of that, but the young men everyday just wanted to come around me and talk. And I wouldn't talk to them about it because I didn't want anybody there to think that I was there for any other purpose than the reason I stated.

V. Boyd: What did you state?

Floyd Rose: That I was going down there to write a book and to take some courses, Black History courses in preparation for writing a book.

V. Boyd: What did you learn while you were there?

Floyd Rose: Nothing. [*Pause*] You asked me.

V. Boyd: And what....

Floyd Rose: Well, I had taken the time off. I was on sabbatical. Let me back up a little bit. G. P. Holt's daughter, Phyllis Davis, is an excellent teacher. Now I really enjoyed her class. And when I said I didn't learn anything, that's an exception to that. She was a tremendous teacher. And she taught Black History and she had a way of involving students and allowing them the freedom to express their feelings and the freedom to participate and the freedom to disagree. And I enjoyed her class, but beyond that I got nothing.

V. Boyd: The religion classes?

Floyd Rose: I got nothing. I mean that I could have taught them, you know, just taken out my old notebooks if I still had them from forty years ago.

V. Boyd: Well, Jack wouldn't allow anyone to rock the boat too much down there, especially Bible classes.

Floyd Rose: Well, let's see now. Ben Foster taught Bible and so did Gibbs, Jr. I mean Gibbs the third, taught Bible. Dr. Farmer was still there. I don't know what he taught because I wasn't in any of his classes, but he was still there.

V. Boyd: Let's go then back to Toledo and the death of your wife and the play.

Floyd Rose: Sure. I've always been an admirer of Dr. King and wanted to audition for Abby Mann, a producer out of Hollywood who put together a movie called "King." But was not allowed the opportunity to audition after I'd been promised the audition because Mrs. King decided she wanted an established actor to play the role. In fact, it was Paul Winfield. And so then I developed what I called an imaginary letter from Martin Luther King to America that every year I would recite updating the material. It was what I think and how I think Dr. King would say it if he was still alive. Then I was attending a play called, "Mom, I Want to Sing" at the Masonic auditorium in Toledo along with probably 24 or 2500 other people. And during that play I watched all those people coming there, I listened to the applause, I saw the reaction. I leaned over and said to a friend of mine who was sitting next to me, in fact several members from Family Church were there, but Jesse Mitchell, I believe, not Jesse, yes Jesse. I can't think of her last name now, was sitting next to me and I said, "I'm going to play Dr. King on that stage on January 15th ." And she just laughed. This was around, oh I guess, early spring or something, or late spring. And she just laughed. I went right out and I told the lady who was in charge of scheduling that I wanted to reserve January 15, 1989, reserve the auditorium. And she said, "For what?" And I told her, "I don't know the name of it, but it will be a play about Martin Luther King, Jr." Anyway we got the date.

And for the next three weeks, I went out there and I sat there alone in the auditorium with my eyes closed and visualized myself up on that stage playing Dr. King and I would practice his speeches, etc, etc. Anyway for three weeks, once a week, I'd go there and just sit there and I'd hear the people applauding, I'd see them standing, I'd see them in line getting tickets. You know you have to see it before you see it. Do it before you do it. Get there before you get there. So I called my sister in Detroit, Sylvia, and asked her about writing a play. And she did and it was called "Long Live the Dream." And then I went to the different businesses and I got them to pay for the production, the cost of the production itself. And then we sold tickets so that the money from the ticket sales would go to the "Save Our Children Scholarship Trust Fund" that I had created from the \$25,000 settlement that I received from Forest Auto Parts that grew out of the discrimination suit that I had filed against them. They had sold me an auto part for four times as much as they sold Whites and I sued them. Anyway we sold the tickets for \$15. When the committee met and asked me what we were going to sell them for and I told them fifteen dollars." They thought that was too much and suggested that we do five dollar tickets. Okay, five dollar tickets. And I said, "Well, you know, I'm worth fifteen dollars." They said, "We didn't pay but sixteen dollars to see "Mama I want to Sing." I said, "Don't sell me cheap. I think the people will pay it." You can't, you know you've got to act important if you are going to convince people that you are important. Anyway I went through that little thing with them. So we had the tickets printed up, fifteen dollars a head. And three days before time for the play, Jesse Mitchell came in and he said, "Rev, we've got a problem." I said, "What's the problem?" He said, "We haven't sold but ten tickets." I said, "Ten tickets, ten tickets." Then he said, "What are you going to do?" I said, "Well, we're going on with the play." So I called a news conference and I do what I do best – talk. And so I bragged about the play. And I said, "It's

going to make you cry and it's going to make you laugh. It's going to take you back in time and then it's going to take you to the future. You won't want to miss it," etc., etc. Went on and on and on. Finally I got people excited about it. And then I said, "If you don't get your tickets by twelve o'clock tomorrow," - this was on Thursday. I said, "If you don't get your tickets by twelve o'clock tomorrow you know you may not be able to get in." So one lady called my church and said, "Reverend Rose, I heard you on the radio and you said the tickets are going like hot cakes." And I said, "Yes." "So do you think you could save me two?" I said, "No, M'am, I can't promise anything past twelve o'clock." She said, "Oh, my God." And so she took off from her job and came running over to the church. And said, "Where do you get tickets." And I said, "Well, if any of them are left, they would be down there with the deacon." So she went into the basement where he was handling the tickets and Deacon Bower spoke to her. And she said, "Reverend Rose said the tickets are selling like hotcakes and just I hope you have just two more. Have at least two. I just need two." He said, "Oh, I've got about five hundred of them here." So she got her two tickets obviously. And then she just shook her head when she thought about that he had a whole lot left.

But to make a long story short when the curtains rose on January 15, 1989 at the Masonic Auditorium, every seat was full. The tragedy in all of that was that on that same night my two children, my twins, Carl and Carol, walked into their mother's bedroom and she was sprawled, her body was sprawled out on the floor. She had had a massive heart attack. So, of course, that put a damper on everything. Sylvia and the other people were out at the auditorium. I was getting ready to leave to go out there. My dad was there in the house. And I was trying to console the children. We were just in an uproar and wondering whether or not I should go on with it. All these people had paid all this money. It was like an hour and a half before time for the curtain to go up. So I hugged the kids and my daddy and all and went on out there and gathered everybody around and Sylvia had us to pray and then she looked at them, I never will forget this, she said, "I'm not concerned about Floyd." Said, "He's going to be all right. I'm concerned about the rest of you." And then she looked at me and I was all right. We did it and it came out okay. And then next night, of course, we came to Detroit to do it again. I didn't go to the reception that night afterwards. I went on back with my children. But that was a tragedy.

V. Boyd: Had your wife's health been giving any signals?

Floyd Rose: No, that's what shocked us all. I couldn't figure out, but obviously there must have been something, but she had been in the hospital before, but it had absolutely nothing to do with her heart. She had some stomach problems for awhile. But she had, the doctor just said she had a massive heart attack. Yeah.

V. Boyd: And she's buried in Toledo?

Floyd Rose: In Toledo, at Forest cemetery. Yeah.

V. Boyd: You raised your children primarily in Toledo? [*Floyd Rose:* Yes.] You want to talk much about them?

Floyd Rose: Well, I tell you what I regret, Vernon, more than anything and it's difficult even now to talk about it. [*V. Boyd:* You don't have to.] I don't mind. Maybe I ought to. I didn't

spend the kind of time that I should have with them in their earlier years. I understood, for some reason, that the church was more important than family. And I sacrificed my family for the sake of the church. I was gone all the time. I was doing, at one time, anywhere from twenty to twenty-six meetings a year and some of those were two weeks. You know I wasn't at my own church - hardly ever. And I never spent time with the children. I never took them to the park. I never said, "Here, Billy, catch." I never threw a ball at 'em. None of those kind of things that kids need in their formative years. They were warm in the winter and cool in the summer. They had plenty to eat. And I thought that was loving them. But I didn't pay the kind of attention to them that any good father pays to his children. And so I never was close to them. In fact after their mother passed, we began to get close. But it was never what it should have been. And now, I'm closer to them now than what I was during those earlier years. I'll never shall forget - the Lectureship was in Toledo in 1964 and I was in Macon, Georgia. I was down there for nine months with the church there. My wife was heavy, expecting, and she was sitting on the side of the bed as I was getting ready to go out the door with my luggage. And she was crying. And she looked up at me and she said, "Floyd, please, don't leave me like this." I didn't think anything about it. I didn't think anything about it. "Oh," I said, "You'll be all right. Somebody will take you to the hospital." Just so insensitive. Got on the plane and came on to the Lectureship because I was on the program. I had to speak at the Lectureship. Got here and got a phone call that said that I had twins. I was around, you know, somebody made that announcement. Everybody was congratulating me, except for one lady and she was from Indianapolis, Indiana. Her name was Sadie Grimes, an elderly lady. She came up to me and she looked dead into my eye and she said, "You go home. You don't have any business here. You go home to your wife, she needs you. You go home to your wife!" And that's what everybody should have told me. But I thank God that she did.

And I caught a plane and left, went home. But I don't think Ann ever quite forgave me for that. The sad part about it, I didn't even see that being important to her that I be there and now as I travel across the country and I freely talk about my own family and how negligent I was because I see the same thing happening with so many ministers. One of our leading ministers, two of his sons were in prison at the same time for armed robbery. Another's son killed his girlfriend and tied her up in a blanket and set fire to her, to the body. He was more afraid to tell his daddy that she was pregnant than he was to kill her. Another leading minister's son was also in jail for robbery. Another leading minister's son is in jail now because he had become a big time drug dealer and ordered somebody killed. The list goes on. So while we are taking care of the House of God, Satan has entered our own houses and families are being torn apart. It's a real, real tragedy. My daughter got caught up in the drug situation. I thank God that she's doing fine now. And she has her own home and she's going to church now but I lost her for about three years to that life. That really put me through Hell. But I also discovered that what you going through is never as important as what you are going to. And sometimes what you go through makes you bitter, but what you're going to always makes you better. And then you can look back and thank God for whatever it was that he brought you through.

V. Boyd: What about your boys?

Floyd Rose: Well, one is in Atlanta. Gerald, the youngest son is in Atlanta. My one son, Carl, who was one of the twins, who saw his mother, who discovered his mother's body, never quite got over that. He has been unable to work or finish school. At the time, he was making A's at

TU and now he is on SSI. Every time he gets a job, he just falls apart. He spent several months in the mental institution behind that. And my other son and daughter are in Toledo and they're doing okay.

V. Boyd: The one you named after Billie....

Floyd Rose: Yeah, Billie Sol is, Billie Sol Rose is my oldest boy. He's married. Been married now, I guess, close to 20 years. They just adopted a son a couple of years ago because they couldn't have children, but they're doing fine.

V. Boyd: And then your twin daughter?

Floyd Rose: She works. She lives in Toledo. [*V. Boyd:* Married?] No, she's not married. She bought a townhouse there that I sold her. She's doing fine. She's working. I don't know whether she's going to church all the time. [*unclear*] Billie does not go. But I have become increasingly closer to all of them, particularly the boys, than I have been.

V. Boyd: I had a note.... You said in 1950, you preached your first sermon and you made a trip with Keeble. You went south west. Did you see the school on that trip?

Floyd Rose: What school?

V. Boyd: Southwestern.

Floyd Rose: No, no, not that trip. I think the first time I saw Southwestern might have been in '51 or '52. I went to, we traveled. The first trip that I took with Brother Keeble, I believe, took us to Chattanooga and then Atlanta and Macon and then Valdosta and then on down to Florida all the way into Miami. We went down one coast and then back up another. And the next trip that I took, took us to Texas. I believe that ...

V. Boyd: That's not what I understood before that the first trip took you down to Texas.

Floyd Rose: I'm getting that confused. I'm not sure whether the first trip took me to Texas or the second one. I met Billie Sol. It had to be the second trip because I met Billie Sol in 1951 and I began preaching in the fall of 1950.

V. Boyd: Well, when you went down to Valdosta, did you preach for your dad?

Floyd Rose: Yes, but I stopped in. The first time... Let me back up, I'm getting this confused now. The first time that I preached in Atlanta was by myself [*V. Boyd:* When you came home for Christmas?] for Christmas and so I obviously didn't stop in Atlanta until after then, but I traveled with Brother Keeble, I know, before then. Maybe we did go to Texas first, but that's not when I met Billie Sol. I know in 1961 when I met him. [*V. Boyd:* Sixty-one?] '51, '51.

V. Boyd: Well, I know that Southwestern came to its present site in 1950. And Bowser saw it just before he died. I just wondered if you had seen it in its early days.

Floyd Rose: No. I'm almost sure it was '52 before I went down there because I went with Brother Keeble.

V. Boyd: Okay. One of the first things that I picked up in Detroit when word about the Rose family was flak about your dad and his second marriage. [*Floyd Rose:* Um.] That's personal....

Floyd Rose : I don't care. No it's not.....

Side ends.

Tape 3, Side 1(mini-cassette in collection)

V. Boyd: When the light is on, it's on. This is October the 28th and I'm talking on the mini-cassette. This is the third tape of Floyd Rose and he is reflecting upon his life and the changes that he has seen.

Floyd Rose: What do you want to know?

V. Boyd: You were about to say something. I just want to capture it.

Floyd Rose: Well, I was ready until you turned on the tape recorder. [*Both laugh.*] I was just saying one time I was invited by the treasurer of the Ridgewood Church of Christ to a singing. And several nationally acclaimed groups, instrumental groups, and among them was a group out of Milwaukee called "The Supreme Angels." And when we went into this large auditorium and were sitting down, my first thought was, "You know it's a shame that these people are all enjoying themselves and they're all going to Hell. And I'm the only Christian in here." And I looked around and everybody else seemed to be happy and I'm miserable because one part of me says, "You know you like this." And the other part of me says, "But you can't like this." One part said, "This is good." And the other part said, "But it can't be good because it's wrong." And then the Supreme Angels started singing. I'll never forget the man, they called him Slim. He started singing "I want to be just like Him. I want to sing just like him. I want to walk just like Him. I want to talk just like Him. I want to pray just like Him." And then he fell on his knees and threw a handkerchief straight up in the air and sang, "I want to preach just like Him." And before I knew it, I hollered, "Yeah! Oh." [*Both laugh.*]

V. Boyd: Got caught up in the moment.

Floyd Rose: Oh yeah, oh yeah. But after that, Vernon, I started reading Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John again. And I just wanted to know more about Him. And in reading about Him, I discovered that He was not like them. He was different. And the only people that He ever pointed a finger at were the people who were pointing fingers at other people. And the woman that was caught in adultery, by His own standard, He was the only one qualified to stone her and was the only one not interested in stoning her. And the more I read about Him, the more I became convinced that I wanted to be like Him and the more I tried to become like Him, the less I saw myself as being one with them. Them meaning, Churches of Christ members who lived to

condemn other people and Jesus was so different and that's why He made such a difference in people. And I just want to be a Jesus man. And Rubel Shelley's book, *I Just Want To Be a Christian* says it all. I don't want to be a Baptist Christian. I don't want to be a Methodist Christian. I don't want to be a Church of God in Christ. I don't want to be a Church of Christ Christian. I just want to be a Christian. And I seek to hold hands with all men. The only man's hand I won't hold is that man who by holding his hand stops me from holding hands with other men. And I believe that we are all children of God, brothers and sisters. Not because of what we know, but because of whom we know. Not because of what we own, but because of who owns us. Not because of who we are, but because of whose we are. If we could really understand that it is not what we know or t what we can do, but who knows us and what He has done for us. We can walk away from all of those differences that make no difference to Him. And, therefore, would make no difference to us.

V. Boyd: That's right. In connection with this, I'm still who I am, and my background has been shaped so much by the traditional church, how are you comfortable with Reverend Rose and speaking of other people as Father So and So, how do you get through that?

Floyd Rose: Well, we react to people based on our own definition of them. And if my definition of you is a preacher and reverend to you and to me, it means that you are a preacher and I don't have any problem with that. Unfortunately in the past I thought that when a Baptist member referred to his preacher as reverend, he thought he was God, but I discovered that he doesn't think that he's God, we just thought he thought that. To him, that's just what you call preachers, like you call doctors, doctors, and lawyers, lawyers, or whatever. I find it interesting that we don't have any problem saying doctor this and doctor that and doctor the other, but a few years back I remember, because we didn't have any doctors, at least among the Black brothers, we frowned on that. And I used to hear Brother Hogan talk about a collar, a ministerial collar, reminding him of a mule and wearing your collar backwards and everybody had a big laugh. And now I go to the lectureships and I see the collars and I hear the "doctors". In fact, there are so many doctors among us now when I go there now when I get up to speak and I recognize them, I have to make sure that I've got them all. There's Dr. Washington. There's Doctor Wells. There's Dr. Evans. There's Dr. Holt. There's Dr. Clay. There's Dr. Washington again. There's Dr. Winston. In fact, there is so many of them that I'm not sure that doctor means very much anymore. But you see I had another experience about that. You mention about titles and stuff. The church in Toledo attracted people from so many different backgrounds. The people, who came from the Methodist church and Baptist church, called me Reverend Rose. The ones, who came from the Church of God in Christ, called me Elder Rose. The ones, who came from the Church of God called me Pastor Rose. And then there were people who simply called me "Floyd" because when I introduced myself, wherever I am, I just say, "I'm Floyd Rose." And that attracted some people. So we had this big church now with 500 folks. Some people saying "reverend," some people saying "Floyd," and for the ones of them that didn't know any better, a few of them said, "Doctor," but we had all these people called me all these different names. One lady, she was president of the nurse's guild, in a board meeting, said, "Pastor, I'm just uncomfortable about something. I notice that some of the people here call you "Floyd." I just think that we should not refer to our pastor by his first name. We ought to at least say 'Reverend Rose' or 'Brother Rose,' or 'Elder Rose' or 'Pastor Rose,' but not just 'Floyd.' It just seems so disrespectful." So the president of the choir was also on the board and she asked if she could say

the last prayer ...and she didn't comment on that. And I said, "Fine" because in that church women prayed too. And we stood and she just started praying and she said, "Oh, Jesus, I just want to thank you. Thank you that we don't have to call you Elder Jesus. We don't have to call you Doctor Jesus and Reverend Jesus and Pastor Jesus. We can just call you Jesus and if Jesus is good enough for you, Floyd is good enough for him." [*Both laugh.*]

V. Boyd: She got her point across.

Floyd Rose: [*Still laughing*] You know how you can talk about people without talking to them. I think that ended that. And we would think it sacrilegious to call Jesus, Doctor Jesus, or Brother Jesus, or Reverend Jesus, but Jesus is good enough. [*Laughs*] I just love that. I tell it all the time. I just love that. I just love that. But no, I don't have any problem with Reverend Rose because I know all they mean is that I'm a preacher.

V. Boyd: What about Father?

Floyd Rose: I'm less comfortable with that 'cause nobody's ever called me that. They've called me "Mother something," but I mean. [*Both laugh*] They've never called me "Father."

V. Boyd: But you know Jesus' specific statement calling no one "Father?" In the presence of a Catholic priest, how do you introduce him?

Floyd Rose: Father. If it's Father James, if that's what his people call him, that's what I call him. I don't see Him in that. I don't see Jesus, obviously the Catholic Church wasn't back then so He couldn't have been talking about them. I think that the Catholic, and I may be wrong on this, and you may have researched it, but I see them seeing him saying "Father" to him just like the Methodists say "Reverend" or the Church of Christ people say "Brother." And incidentally the term "brother" describes a relationship, but we use it as a title, and we ought to stop playing with that. I remember the point was made by Arthur Lee Smith once whose name is now Molefe Kete Asante. He said, "We condemn others for calling their preachers "Reverend" but then our brothers, Brother reverently". And we're not saying Vernon Boyd, my brother. I'm saying "Brother Boyd." The point for me is, and I've always been impressed with this among the White churches. I've noticed that most people just call by their first name and I like that. And incidentally I also believe that if I walk into a group of people and there are ten or fifteen people say there. I'm Floyd. This is Vernon. This is James. This is John. This is Jackie, etc. Then it provides a real opportunity for closeness and fellowship, but once titles are introduced, where people work, where they live, what kind of car they drive, what kind of house they live in, how much money they've got in the bank, how many stocks and bonds they own. Each one of these things places a barrier between people and the have nots suddenly become uncomfortable because they see these people then based on what they have and not who they are. [*V. Boyd:* Yes.] I just like people to call me Floyd. That's good enough. Just like somebody introducing you and they go along, take out this rap sheet this long and then people expect you to be real good and if you don't have it that night, it's over, but if they don't say anything, just say well this is Vernon Boyd, then whatever you do won't be expected. [*Laughs.*] So it will be fine.

V. Boyd: Let me talk about another hot topic that is the role of women in the church.

Floyd Rose: Why did I think that that was going to be next? [*Laughs*]

V. Boyd: 'Cause you've been talking about women praying, etc. How did you work through, 'cause I know you came out of my background, [*Floyd Rose:* Yeah, yeah.] how did you work through this?

Floyd Rose: Well, usually my awareness was always sparked by an incident that shocked me. Peaches and I were in Evansville, Indiana, a couple of summers ago and we had a dinner following the service in the annex. And there was a lady standing next to me, who was not a member of the Church of Christ. After the women in kitchen had finished the dinner and had placed it on the table and everything, one of the women came out and said, "We are already to eat now if we can get one of the brothers to give thanks." Says "I would, but I'm a lady, a woman so..." This woman who had bowed her head, kind of did like that and she whispered under her breath, but loud enough for me to hear her, saying, "You mean to tell me that they can go out of here and work and earn the money and buy the food. They can cook it, prepare it and serve it, and can't give thanks for it." And somehow, Vernon, that just did something to me. And I looked at Peaches and she looked back at me. And then when I finished there, I went home and Sister Roundtree, I don't know whether you know her or not. She's from [*name unclear*] Florida. She's about 80 years old. We were out at my sister's house in the country for dinner. When dinner was over, there were men and women there. I turned to her and I said, "Sister Roundtree, before you go why don't you pray for us?" And she said, "I guess it's all right since we are not in the church house." And a light went off again. It's okay for her to pray in my sister's house, but not in my Father's house. And there was something not quite right about that for me. And then I started asking....

V. Boyd: Dates?

Floyd Rose: Oh, that was, that was just this last, I believe this last spring, '98.

V. Boyd: And so when was the Evansville, Indiana?

Floyd Rose: That was '96, the summer of '96.

V. Boyd: So you never had them to pray much before that?

Floyd Rose: No. [*V. Boyd:* Okay.] We never really had them to pray. We had them to sing solos, but not to pray. But now at the Church at Pine Hill, they do everything. They pray. They read the Scripture. In fact, we try to have a woman and a man at each service. The other thing that I find interesting is a woman can pass the collection tray or the communion tray from left to right and if need be back over the seat, but they can't give it to the first person. They can't start up front. Or they can make announcements if they are in the bulletin. Or if the brother gets it wrong, she can raise her hand and say, "No, no, that's not quite right. It's such and such a thing." If she can sit in a seat and make it, why can't she make it. So all of those things just don't make no sense to me, period. I decided just to do what I believe and let the chips fall where they may. I don't think... All these issues about whether a woman ought to preach or whether a woman

ought to lead the singing or whether a woman ought to.... Sometimes a woman ought to lead it. In fact, right over there where I'm at a meeting now, they've got some women that can sing. Sister Sledge, I think it would be great if she was up there leading the singing every night, we'd probably have a more exciting song service. That's no reflection on the brothers, but she can just do it better. My wife leads the singing all the time at Pine Hill.

V. Boyd: At Friendship Baptist, you didn't have women?

Floyd Rose: Oh, yeah, yeah. I thought you meant, I'm sorry, at Friendship Baptist we had women, but I thought you meant after I'd come back to the Church of Christ, but some Baptist preachers now are strict. They won't even allow a woman in the pulpit. If they make an announcement, they have to stand on the floor. Oh yeah, we dropped all that then. In fact, we had women on the board. Women run most churches anyway. You know, they may be more men directed, but they may not run Oakland. I'm not sure that Mrs. [name unclear] doesn't have great influence. [Laughs.] Most churches that are really run, there's a woman that's real prominent in making decisions.

V. Boyd: Well, then preaching?

Floyd Rose: I don't have any problem with that. I don't. I just don't, you know, Jesus met a woman at the well talked to her a little while and then made her a missionary. She went into town and told everybody. What do we say, you can't? What is prophesying? What does that mean that a woman prophesied? I just don't believe you should blame anybody for being what they're not responsible for being. I mean, in other words, a woman didn't ask to be a woman any more than I asked to be a man. Since I had no choice in my gender and neither did she, why is it that I should blame her for what she is? Or rob her of an opportunity to do something that she is very well qualified to do, except she's a woman? How do you explain Galatians 3:26, 28, where according to the message, the new version, it says, "In Christ, there can be no distinction between Jews and non-Jews" which means no racial walls. No distinction between slaves and free men, no class walls. Then it says men and women, no gender walls. How do you say well that means when you come to Blacks and Whites, no discrimination, but when it comes to women, somehow that's the exception? I don't buy it.

V. Boyd: How do you reconcile the women keep silent in church? And if a woman has a question, ask her husband.

Floyd Rose: [Laughing] Well, what if she ain't got a husband? To me. Let me back up. I believe that the Bible is like the Constitution and must be interpreted in the light of the facts at the time that it is being interpreted. What do I mean by that? When the founders of this country gave us the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, with rare exception, they owned slaves. They owned slaves. During the time of the Bible, people owned slaves. But who among us today would get up and pretend that there is some justification in the Scriptures for owning slaves in 1998? Nobody would. And I'm saying the same thing is true when it comes to women. Ten years from now all that's going to be gone in my humble judgment. It's gone just about everywhere, but the Church of Christ and maybe the Jehovah's Witnesses, I'm not even sure about that, but I know the Churches of Christ.

V. Boyd: But you haven't explained "Let women keep silent in churches."

Floyd Rose: Well, because either "silent" means not saying anything at all, and we don't do that because they couldn't sing. They couldn't even pray in unison with others or couldn't repeat messages that are being read. Nothing. They'd just have to sit there. That's not going to wash and nobody's going to do it. I don't try to explain that away. I mean, some, some authors can say Paul meant this and meant that. I just simply say that in this day and time, the Bible has to be interpreted in the light of the times in which it is interpreted. Just like women were not allowed to vote years ago and Blacks were not allowed to vote years ago and were on the back of the bus and all that other kind of stuff. All that's gone, taken by time. I think that, first of all, I don't worship the Bible, I worship Jesus and I am inclined to treat women as I think Jesus treated them. And he never told them when to be quiet.

V. Boyd: Well, when you begin to cast the Bible in terms of its cultural setting that's true on one hand, but you're also getting on a slippery slope.

Floyd Rose: Principles don't change. No, principles don't change. Example. I don't know what it is, but say the speed limit out here in front of this church is 35 miles an hour, but it's slippery, and it's snowing. You don't drive thirty-five miles an hour and you don't tell the police that "I've got the right to do it" even though the sign says 30. Okay. Because behind that law is a principle called the Preservation of Life. Now the law must be adjusted, you must adjust to the law in order to hold on to the principle. If you drive...If I'm in the car with you and I develop a heart attack and you're driving 35. And it's clear, the roads are dry and you look at me and say, "Well, I would get you there Floyd, but I've got to obey the law and the law says 35 miles an hour. And I'm [pants] "I know how you feel, but that's just too bad. It's the law." No, that's nonsense, that's what that is. You would drive at reasonable speed to get me to the hospital even it means exceeding speed limit established by law because behind that law was the preservation of life. And you will violate the principle that gave birth to the law if you didn't exceed the speed limit. And I feel the same way. I missed my point. I feel the same way about Jesus. Jesus was a principle. He didn't come to bring law. We had that with Moses. He came to provide principles and I think the principle for women and their participation is really laid out in Galatians 3 and 28, more clearly than any other passage that I'm familiar with in the Bible. And if the principle is equality, total equality then I think that I have the right to violate any other passage that I don't understand by the way in the context of these times in order to hold onto the principle. Let me put it this way, I'm comfortable with saying "free the women," than I am in "don't free them" to participate fully in the worship and work of the church.

V. Boyd: Well, you're pitting Paul against Paul and the context of what's going on with this principle, or whether it's cultural. Context is predominant, you're still pitting Paul against Paul.

Floyd Rose: I'm just saying this, Vernon, I just said what I believe. [Laughs] It may not make any sense, but I'm comfortable with it.

V. Boyd: Do you get these kinds of questions all the time?

Floyd Rose: Yeah, yeah. I've got a tape I've got to send you. I wrote an article for the *Valdosta Times* and a Church of Christ minister that lives right down the road there and preaches for a little church in Jennings, Florida, wrote a counter article. And then I invited him to have a discussion with me on the radio. We received more calls - it is a call-in show - more calls about that than anything else. And he said that a woman should not pray even if her husband is present at the dinner table. And you know, most people outside the Church of Christ think that's ludicrous. And I mean they called him and told him that too. He thought he won though.

V. Boyd: Of course.

Floyd Rose: I'll tell you something else. I've gone to...this is just amazing. I've gone to places where we just sit around in a circle and all of a sudden there was, at least, a semblance of equality there. Wasn't nobody behind and wasn't nobody in front. Nobody was standing up. Everybody was just sitting there. We just passed things. Women felt freer to talk. And incidentally, if women are supposed to be the servants, why don't we just let them serve the communion? That makes sense to me. [*Laughs*] But somehow we say standing up there has something to do with authority. And if a woman stands up there, somehow she's usurping authority. Well, how do you usurp authority that someone gives you? Now I believe that the man ought to be the backbone of the church, just as he is the backbone of the family and was built on him. No question about that. But now that has absolutely nothing to do with tasks to be performed. Nothing! If a woman has experience, say, as superintendent of the public schools, why couldn't she be superintendent of the Sunday School if she knows how to divide the classes and inspire the teachers. Why should I do that? In fact, my wife teaches Bible class when I'm away - the Adult Bible class, men and women. And when I got back the other Sunday, one of the sisters said, "Floyd, why don't you just let Peaches have this class?" [*Laughs*] She said, "She's a better teacher." [*Both laugh*] "You can preach, but you ought to let her teach."

V. Boyd: And then this brings up the role of men. What do you think the Biblical role of man is?

Side ends.

Tape 3, Side 2

V. Boyd: What is the role of the man in the church? What is the unique role of the man?

Floyd Rose: I believe that the role of the man and the role of the woman never changed since creation. Never. I think it is the responsibility of the man to take charge, to be responsible, to exercise authority. I believe it is the role of a woman to help him, whatever he needs her to help him do, whether it is teaching class, delivering a message, with the communion. She has not exercised or she has not usurped authority over him, she is still helping him carry out what God had wanted him to do. When did the role of the man and woman change? I don't think it's changed since the very beginning of time. She is his helpmeet. And if he needs other help to meet expenses then that's what she does. [*Laughs*]

V. Boyd: I'm just trying to pick your brain, [*Floyd Rose:* Go ahead] but Jesus selecting men for Apostles. And the role of the elder is the ...

Floyd Rose: Well, now you do know now don't you that there are some scholars who say that there were women elders. [*V. Boyd:* Deacons, not elders] No, I've read where some scholars say that there were women elders. That, now I don't know. You know, I'm not that familiar with all this. That in fact I read that recently when doing some research that deacon and deaconesses. Now in the Church of Christ I never hear the term "deaconess." Why don't we hear that? I'm not sure. Some people argue that just the wife of a deacon, but she has no special role other than she is a deaconess because he is a deacon. Well, let me just say across the board, I think that people ought to be given the opportunity to work and worship with the gifts and talents with which God has blessed them. Period. Without regard for anything for which they are not responsible including the accidents of race and of gender.

V. Boyd: Thank you. [*Both laugh*] I jotted down some things.

Floyd Rose: But, by the way, let me say this. The same people who make the argument that women should not participate freely and equally in the worship and work of the church are the same people who made the same argument about Blacks a few years ago. The same argument was made. They were different. Now they don't make that argument any more. And I venture to say, a few years from now they are not going to make that argument about women.

V. Boyd: Well, obviously we are in a time of transition on many issues. That being one of the hot ones. Talk about raising Sylvia.

Floyd Rose: Oh, I didn't really raise her, except she came to live with us the last year of her high school. She graduated from Woodward High School there in Toledo and she lived with us during that time. Then we sent her to Southwestern.

V. Boyd: Any interesting stories?

Floyd Rose: Just one that I don't let her forget and that is [*Both laugh*] I came home one day and told her that I was getting ready to get a job as Director of the Human Relations for the Toledo public schools. And she just fell back on the couch and laughed and said, "Ain't nobody going to hire you to direct nothing." They did. [*Both laugh.*] That's why I don't tell kinfolk nothing I'm getting ready to do. [*Both laugh*] 'Cause most of the time they don't see it for you and they think you can't see it for yourself. But Sylvia is extremely gifted and talented and I respect that, but I don't get no advice from her when I get ready to do something. [*Both laugh*]

V. Boyd: Who are the men to watch in the church of Christ?

Floyd Rose: Among the Blacks... [*V. Boyd:* Yes] you mean who will sort of [*V. Boyd:* Shape the future.] I believe Cornelius Crenshaw will be one. Jerry Taylor would be another. Kenny Morrison will be another. Ken Green will be another. And then you have some who as soon as they think it's safe will change. Maybe, and some of the preachers are more political than they are committed to Christ. It is important to them to attend a Lectureship. It is important to them

to hold the right meeting for the right church. As soon as they decide that Jesus is their real source and all these other things are resources, they're going to take a stand about what is right and be free in Christ to do what some of the rest of us are doing.

V. Boyd: I'm glad to hear Ken Morrison to be in that list. [*Floyd Rose:* Yeah, yeah.] He's a good man.

Floyd Rose: Yes, he's a good man. I tried to get...I understood, I don't whether you are familiar with it or not, but I was told by the dean of students, no, the dean of men, the dean of the college at Southwestern. I can't recall his name. It'll come to me. You know him. Anyway he's the dean, Foster, Ben Foster. Ben Foster told me in 1994 that a survey had been taken on the campus of Abilene Christian University and more than seventy percent of the faculty and the student body said that they believed that there were Christians in other churches. I asked him to conduct that same survey at Southwestern [*chuckles*] [*V. Boyd:* And] And this is an exact quote, "We don't want to know." [*Laughs*] "No, we don't need to know that." And I think that if you took a survey where people didn't have to put their names on it, nobody had to know who they were, you'd have 70, maybe more than that, maybe 80 percent of people in the Churches of Christ really don't believe that everybody else is going to Hell and they're the only ones going to Heaven. That's good to talk in church, but they don't really believe that.

V. Boyd: I just jotted some things down. What do you hope to accomplish with the rest of your life?

Floyd Rose: I don't know how long that's going to be. If I could have some minor influence on young preachers who are wrestling already with this thing, if I could just nudge them over the edge into Jesus Christ. And if they could just see that He is, in fact, their source and everything else is just a resource and since He is resource full, which means he is full of resources if they lose a resource here, He will provide another resource whether that has to do with friends or their livelihood or whatever. He is, should be the center core of their lives. It will be worth whatever it costs me. I'm amazed to be honest with you that I'm still receiving invitations to go all over the country because I'm pretty straightforward with where I am and what I believe. Now I never just go somewhere to cause a problem just to prove that I can create a problem, but if you ask me what I believe I'm going to tell you. But I will tell you what I will not do. I will not preach what I do not believe. Under no circumstances. Period. I won't do that.

V. Boyd: You did that enough in younger days?

Floyd Rose: Say what?

V. Boyd: You did that enough in younger days?

Floyd Rose: Oh yeah. Vernon, I'm really ashamed of my behavior. I never, I never will forget. I used to stand up and say things like, "The Baptist church isn't in the Bible anywhere." And then, "Anybody in here say that it is, stand up now." And I used to say things like, "I'm going to drive this nail if it splits the plank," emphasizing my right to say whatever I believed in

whatever way I felt I needed to say it. And following the service one Sunday morning, a little lady at the Ridgewood Church came up to me. We called her “Mother Harris.” In fact, she just died last week. I buried her. Did her funeral, Saturday. She looked at me. First she hugged me and then she said, “Son, could I ask you something?” I said, “Yes, m’am.” And she said, “What good is a split plank?” Wisdom! And another time I was preaching, holding a meeting at some little old church in the country. A lady took me to dinner, older lady once again. And she took me out into her back yard where there was an apple tree at the edge of the fence. Said, “I want to show you something, boy.” And she picked up a stick and she walked within maybe four or five feet of that tree and she drew that stake back and threw it as hard as she could into that apple tree. Then she said, “Come here.” And we walked up to the edge of the fence and she said, “How many apples are on the other side?” I said, “Oh, six or seven.” “How many fell on this side.” I said, “One.” And I picked the one up that fell on this side. I picked it up. It was bruised. She said, “That’s what you’re going to end up doing.” I said, “What do you mean by that?” She said, “If you keep preaching like you’re preaching, more of the apples are going to fall on the other side of the fence and the ones that you do get on this side are going to be bruised.” [V. Boyd: Hmm.] I decided to stop mocking apples on the other side and bruising the ones on this side.

V. Boyd: That is wisdom.

Floyd Rose: Yeah. Isn’t that something? I used to try to tell people, now I try to sell people. Anybody can tell somebody something, very few people can sell them something. I don’t want to walk away from anybody saying, “I should have told them.” I want to be able to say “I sold them.” I know now why Jesus was such a great preacher. He told stories that sold people.

V. Boyd: You’re a good storyteller. Do you get that from Marshall?

Floyd Rose: Well, you know, I went through several different phases of preaching. One while, I tried to preach just like my daddy.

V. Boyd: Did he tell stories?

Floyd Rose: Yeah, he told stories, but he also was a Bible person. Most old ministers were, although Brother Keeble was more of a story teller than the Bible quoting preacher. But then one while, after I heard Brother Hogan, I tried to memorize every Scripture I could in the Bible. And I would enjoy quoting scriptures like Matthew 1, you know, “Look at the ‘generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas” and on and on. I’d just mesmerize the audience and then, of course, I’d want the 38th verse of Acts II and I’d start it at the first. I don’t know what that was for, except to show people how much ...that stuff now is just was so vain. Only thing people would say to me when I’d get through was “You sure can preach.” But they never said to me what the people are saying now, “That made sense to me” or “You helped me tonight.” That’s what’s important to me now.

V. Boyd: Good. You have mentioned two or three regrets that you have in life. Losses, family, the kids and so forth. Any other regrets?

Floyd Rose: I regret that I didn't know Jesus before I learned him. If I could back thirty years and if somebody had really sat me down and said, "You really need to know this Man." I just think my life would have been a lot different. I didn't know Him, Vernon. I didn't know Him. Oh, I knew it and I knew them, but I didn't know Him. I knew how to lay down the law, but I didn't know how to live up to the law. I read the Bible like a good lawyer trying to find a way to deal with other people. But I never read it like a son who really wanted to know his father.

V. Boyd: Maybe you've talked about it, but I remember a story in the Ridgewood church about what the other preachers said. [*Floyd Rose:* Yeah.] You were showing off ability.

V. Boyd: Well, who else, are there outstanding people that helped you to know Jesus that you've not talked about?

Floyd Rose: Carl Catcherside, [*V. Boyd:* Wow.] Carl Catherside. I'm trying to remember who, I believe it was Ivory James, who sent me a copy of the *Messenger*. I think that was the name of his little pamphlet. And I read it and I read it again. And then there was another man who put out another book of Restoration something by Leroy Garrett. I had an opportunity to go visit both of them. And I was deeply touched. This, of course, was after my experience at the Ridgewood Church. I was deeply touched by my experience, especially with Carl Catcherside because what I'd read about him early on was totally different and he also was, didn't have that much respect for Black folks in those earlier years. And he also shared all that with me. But I really, lived in their home. I didn't live there. I stayed overnight in their home. Right outside of St. Louis. And then I was invited just to spend some time with Leroy Garrett. I believe he is somewhere in Texas. I can't recall right now. In Dallas or somewhere. [*V. Boyd:* Dallas] Dallas, yeah. I spent the night with him. It's unfortunate that those men had very little influence during their latter years. Carl Catherside had a small, relatively small church. And I'm not so sure about Leroy Garrett's now. I can't, I can't recall, but their writings helped me revisit or created a desire in me revisiting the Restoration Movement. And I'll tell you again. I think that the Restoration fathers had it right. I think they had it right. It's unfortunate that out of that came the one true church and we circled the wagons and said, "We got it." That's unfortunate. Because once you build a wall, you may know what you wall in, but you'll never know what you wall out. And you always wall out more wisdom, you wall out more knowledge, you wall out more love, you wall more freedom. You wall out more of everything. More friends, more wisdom. You wall out far more than you could ever wall in. And I just don't want the walls anymore. I want to learn all I can learn. I want to know everybody I can know.

V. Boyd: Did you ever know [*fist name unclear*] Wallace, Jr.

Floyd Rose: No. I used to read some of his debate books to try to debate somebody. And the man that I used to have these other books by, he used to preach, they're called "Tabernacle Sermons" in Nashville. What was he...? Harmon.[?] N. B. Harmon. The late Leon Bowles and Brownlow and everybody had that book. *Sermons You Can Preach*. Yeah. What was that? One of the famous ones, "Knots in the Devil's Tail" or something like that. He had all of those interesting little sermons. Yeah. Memorized them.

V. Boyd: Well, they contributed an awful lot into how we got to be “the one true church” and that’s why I’m asking. You mentioned the opposites, but these were the ones that were shaping that mindset.

Floyd Rose: What they did was shape Brother Keeble’s mind and Brother Bowser’s mind and then they shaped ours. I really didn’t get that much from them. Most of their books that I read didn’t talk too much about the one true church. But of course, all of the sermons kind of led you to that, but they didn’t say it quite as pointedly as Brother Powell and Brother Hogan and Brother Winston and my dad and those men. They just said that was it. One church is the church of Christ and if you’re not in it, you’re lost – pure and simple. Case closed. Brother Winston said, “God said it, I believe it and I said it.”

V. Boyd: How do you want to be remembered?

Floyd Rose: As a person who was honest, a person of integrity and a person who could see the big picture and, of course, a person who loved Jesus. Doesn’t matter whether anybody agrees with me. It is important to me that they know that I’m honest.

V. Boyd: And that was instilled in you by your father?

Floyd Rose: Yeah.

V. Boyd: Or life experiences?

Floyd Rose: Well, a combination of both. I had an experience with my dad. You know, I don’t know whether I shared this with you. When I left the church of Christ, my dad stood before the River Street church in Valdosta, where he was preaching at the time, and he told them that he would rather have heard that I was dead and that he had to go to Toledo to my funeral than to hear that I had left the Lord’s church. “And I’m going to Toledo and stay for as long as it takes to get him back.” So he came. And every morning he would invite me to the dining room table along with my wife and he would open his Bible. And of course, Vernon, I knew all the scriptures. I mean you can’t prove there is one church, but so many times and so many ways, but I respectfully listened. For two weeks, he did it, every morning. Finally my wife said to him, “Daddy, you say you are going to stay as long as it takes to get Floyd back.” He said, “That’s what I intend to do.” She said, “Well, there’s a house for sale down the road there. I think you’re going to be here a long time.” [*Laughs.*] So we had one experience. You know, every time he’d come, I’d say, “There’s the pulpit.” He’d say, “Are you sure you want me to preach?” I said, “Help yourself.” And I told, before he got there, I said, “Now listen, Jimmy,” he was my organist, “Be quiet.” Best musician in town. I said, “Now Jimmy, my daddy doesn’t like this, but you play it real good so at least, he’s going to have to admit that it sounds good.” And he played that morning “Through the years I’ll keep on toiling.” And, of course, we were all enjoying it. My daddy and my stepmother were sitting there and everybody else just enjoying it. And I sat at the pulpit. He got up. The first thing that he did, he looked around and he looked at the choir and looked at the organist and the pianist and he said, “What’s all this racket you’ve all got in here?” And, of course, people laughed. But he cashed that Baptist check we gave him. And, in fact, he cashed one every month because we sent a couple of hundred dollars down there

every month to his church. And he cashed every Baptist check that we gave him. What got him and every time he'd come, one of our deacons would go to the back. This is a sign of what the church would do for him. Go to the back and get a crisp one hundred bill and always give it to him. No exception. Any time he came, if he came twice a year or once a year, always give him that one hundred dollar bill. But now Daddy would get up and talk about that one true church and us all being all one and all that and we'd all say, "Amen." And then he'd sit down and he wouldn't commune with us. He and Mrs. AZ had to have their little special communion up in my office. I had to always go to the store, had to get the bread and wine and take it upstairs. They had to have their communion separate and apart from the rest of us. Never put anything in the collection because that was contributing to the Devil.

Then I took him to see a Baptist preacher who ran a soup kitchen for the poor. We walked in at feeding time. We sat down and eat. And I introduced Daddy to him. And he said, "You're Floyd's father?" He said, "Yeah." Said, "Well, your son doesn't have service on Sunday nights. We do at [name unclear] Why don't you come on over and preach for me." That was on a Saturday. "Preach for me tomorrow night." And Daddy said, "You sure you want me to preach?" He said, "Sure. He didn't ask what he was going to preach. He didn't ask him anything about his doctrine, just invited him to preach. And Daddy preached. The subject was that "God given upward pull." The place was jam packed. [V. Boyd: I didn't hear that.] "That God given upward pull," [V. Boyd: Say it again.] "That T-H-A-T God Given Upward [V. Boyd: Upward.] Upward Pull. It was derived from a poem of a blind boy who was flying a kite. He couldn't see the movement of the kite, and someone asked him about it. He said, "I just feel good when I feel that upward pull." That's kind of the gist of it. But anyway they took up an offering and gave it and he kept it and then the next morning when he took out his Bible and talked to me again. I said, "Daddy, I just want to ask you one question. Would you treat Reverend [name unclear] like he treated you?" I said, "If he came to Valdosta, would you invite him to the pulpit of River Street just like he invited you to the pulpit of [name unclear]? Would you be as Christian toward him as he was toward you?" He said, "Listen, you and no other Baptist preacher is going to preach at River Street." I said, "Well, Daddy, I don't want to have no part of that no more. I think it's arrogant. I think it's unchristian. I don't think it has anything to do with Jesus. I just don't want to participate in it. I just don't want, I just can't stand it, Daddy. That's contrary to everything I believe that Jesus is about." So he didn't say anything. When he left and went back home, he called me. He said, "Floyd, I was probably wrong," (Didn't say he was wrong.) He said, "I was probably wrong, my attitude about that."

But now every time he'd come to Toledo, I'd say, "There's a pulpit." I'd go down there and sit down and listen to him. He'd come up there and I'd say, "There's the pulpit." I'd come to Valdosta and sit down. The third time around, I was sitting up there, and he got up and he said, "Ehhhhh, I'm going to ask Floyd to preach this morning. Of course, if he says something that ain't in this book, I'm going to have to take care of him." So I got up and preached a nice church of Christ sermon and baptized three people and went on and sat down. [Both laugh.] And after that, every time I went down there, he asked me to preach. And when I went to his funeral, one of the great disappointments of my life was he had asked all of his sons to do his eulogy. We were right over here at the King's house and he looked at me, and Marshall and Jimmy and Richard. He stopped everything. We were having a Christmas party. I don't know why he did – just stopped everything. He said, "Listen, I want to talk to you about my funeral." And everybody was stunned. And he said, "No, no, listen to me. I want my preaching boys to do my eulogy." And then he turned to Sylvia and said, "I want you to write the music especially for my

funeral.” And I expected to participate in doing his eulogy, but at the last minute, for whatever her reasons, my stepmother couldn’t bring herself around to allow me to do it. I think.....

Side 2 ends

Tape 4(Mini-cassette in collection – one side only)

V. Boyd: This is tape 4 with Floyd Rose and he’s talking about his dad’s funeral. And Jack Evans and some other fellows showed up.

Floyd Rose: Yeah, Jack Evans, and Daniel Harrison. They were the original pool of preachers who were there, who wouldn’t have come in that building if Dad had been alive, on his knees, crying, and praying, but with eyes closed and his arms folded and his tongue silenced by death, he brought them there. And I was anticipating eulogizing him along with Richard, and Jimmy, and Marshall. For whatever her reasons, she allowed Sylvia’s one song to be sung and, of course, [unclear] Crown” that Sylvia wrote especially for his funeral and Sylvia sang another song herself, but the rest of the music she had somebody else to do. Then told me, that “Oh Floyd, I want you to lead the family in.” And I said, “Miz AZ, my name is going to go on that program. I don’t have to preach, but I’m going to read the Scripture something, because I know that was my daddy’s wish and everybody in here. And so she put my down to read the Scripture. But then I’d left my.... Was I hurt? Oh yes, that hurt me more than anything. Because that’s what he wanted. And every time my daddy ever asked me for anything, I sent it to him. From the time I was thirteen years old, I never, never took one dime from him. And I would hold meetings and I’d take out my fare to the next place and I’d send him all the rest to him to take care of my brothers and sisters and to pay the house bill. And I was just looking forward to being able to say that I funeralized my daddy. But anyway, they had a place on the program for reflections or something so I just got up there and said whatever I was going to say. [Chuckles.] If I’d been asked to officially do the funeral, but she wanted...She let Jimmy and Richard, and Daddy couldn’t preach for either one of them, but he could preach for me. And yet they did the funeral. And yeah, it hurt. It hurt. It really, really hurt.

V. Boyd: Did Gene have a part?

Floyd Rose: No. Gene. In fact, Gene didn’t do anything. He could have gotten up and talked. He didn’t. And then what’s sort of funny. I did tell that at the church in Toledo. The Baptists chartered a bus and came there to be with me during that time. Then they rented vans so they could just go to the cemetery. In fact spend a lot of money just to be down there. That was the difference. Anyway, I told about – the last sermon he preached by the way, on earth, was preached at my church, the last. It was called, “The Lord God Almighty done brought me through,” taken from a song that James Cleveland sang. And I really regret that I didn’t tape that because he was really good. Before when he started to get sick and everything, he’d come and he’d, you know, just talk a little bit, and then one while he would get sick and we had to pry his hands away from the pulpit because he couldn’t finish. Had to take him to the hospital. But the

last time he was there, he was not in the form he was thirty years ago, but he was good. He was good. But anyway that was one of my regrets.

V. Boyd: Did your stepmother ever apologize?

Floyd Rose: No.

V. Boyd: Is she still alive?

Floyd Rose: She's back in Valdosta. I wrote her a long letter and shared with me my feelings. I just wanted her to say "why." She never has said why. I'm almost sure it was... First of all Jack and Ed and all of them wouldn't have cared and if they had, I wouldn't have cared that they cared. It was my daddy.

V. Boyd: Sure. You mentioned one time your father had a lot influence with some younger preachers. What did you mean?

Floyd Rose: Oh, yeah he...Daddy was the premier minister for that group of young preachers in the age group of Franklin Florence and younger. And I think that's one of the reasons that they helped to clip his wings. If you went to a lectureship and he spoke, I don't care who else was on the program, when you got back to the dormitory and you heard a tape recorder going, it was Alonzo Rose. Because he was different. His style was different. His approach was different. And he was really developing a following among younger preachers.

V. Boyd: You said there was a lot of jealousy?

Floyd Rose: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. You got a lot of that going on now. It's just silly. Daddy's family has a lot of talent. [*Speaks under his breath - unclear*] We didn't ask for it. It's there. Sylvia has been gravely misused and abused. It's just tragic. And Jimmy and Richard wanted to hold on and, of course, wanted to carve their own niche in the brotherhood so they would not invite Daddy to be around them either, but they would go down there and preach and receive an offering, but they never invited him. Well, when Brother Winston said to me one time "Son, you should ask your daddy not to push it with you at Ridgewood because you know you hold a lot of meetings and you could hurt yourself with the brotherhood." And I looked at him and I said, "Brother Winston, there is not a Gospel Meeting anywhere in this country that is more important to me than my daddy. I'm family and I know that you know and everybody else knows that a whole lot of preachers have done a whole lot worse than my daddy's being accused of." So I wouldn't back off. One thing my daddy taught me was independence and I'm proud of that. If I don't do something it's because I don't believe in it just as I explained to Jimmy when I received a letter from that church indicating that I should not come to Oakland to preach. Course I haven't been invited out there either. [*Both laugh*]

V. Boyd: I see you're grieving.

Floyd Rose: [*Laughing*] Yeah oh, that hurts so bad. No, I just think that a man ought to be a man of principle and of conviction. And there's a thin line between cautiousness and cowardice and

most of the time when we say we are being cautious, we just are being cowards purely. I've been torn all the time. I held a meeting for the second largest congregation in Jacksonville and then was asked to hold a meeting for another church where another preacher preached. These other folks didn't have a thing to do with it. [unclear] And they said, "You should not." I said, "Why not?" I'm not into that. Everybody else can do what they want to, but nobody tells me where to go preach. I will go to preach anywhere, to anybody, under any circumstance, period.

V. Boyd: Alexander Campbell all over again. [*Rose laughs.*]

Floyd Rose: And I live with myself. I sleep well at night. Because there's nobody in this country that I have anything against, nobody, and I don't play politics with anybody. And I don't think that a real preacher ought to be governed at any time by what is politically expedient, socially acceptable, or economically feasible. He ought to be driven by what is morally right and he ought to consult God and after that do what he is led to do by God, period. And if he's not going to do that, he shouldn't call himself a preacher. Call yourself whatever you want, but don't call yourself a preacher, not a man of God because you are not.

V. Boyd: Besides the 'Big Four,' who are the most significant church people in your lifetime?

Floyd Rose: In my lifetime?

V. Boyd: Looking back, of course.

Floyd Rose: Looking back through the years. I would say one was a woman named Sadie Grimes who was, two women, I'm sorry, Sadie Grimes and Mindy Mathison and who when I got sick in Nashville. I was staying in the dormitories that was under, that was in the basement of the Nashville Christian Institute and I was victimized by the asthma. She came through and took me to Indianapolis. And I stayed with her and her husband for six or seven months. I learned a lot about just simple goodness while in that home. They weren't any people of any notoriety or anything like that. Just good people who wanted to help somebody they thought might amount to something one day. And then there was Mamie Hambrick, who after I left Indianapolis and went back, she said, "Why don't you just stay with me? I'll take care of you." And I stayed there from that time until the time I graduated from the Nashville Christian Institute. [*V. Boyd:* Hambrick?] Hambrick, Mamie Hambrick. She had a little job making about forty dollars a week. And I would be invited somewhere to preach on Sunday and maybe get twelve or thirteen dollars and I'd come back and I'd give it to her. And she'd get something to it. Man, she could really cook too and she and I could eat. She was just real nice. She'd keep my little change for me. Of course, after I left the dormitory, Billie Sol was paying my tuition and all that, but he didn't pay for my room and board at Mamie Hambrick's. Brother Keeble really wanted me to stay back over at the school. I didn't and I think that killed that part of it. But then Billie Sol picked it back up after I left NCI.

V. Boyd: Other outstanding church people?

Floyd Rose: Um. I would say on my preaching, of course, my daddy had the major influence and then Brother Keeble. But I really regret this now, Vernon. I didn't appreciate Brother

Keeble when I was with him. It was after he died and I looked back that I really came to appreciate his value. He used to write letters. He never got anybody to type for him. He sat down every morning, he'd get up and write people all over the country. And he used to write to me even when I left NCI and I never kept a single letter. Just didn't value it like I would now. He taught me an awful lot about humility. And how to deal with people. I learned a lot from him. He was extremely wise when it came to dealing with White people. I saw him do something in Toledo. He came there to hold a meeting for me and we didn't have much money to give him so I called a White minister and asked him if he could speak out at Echo Meadows Church of Christ in Toledo. And he said, "I'd have to ask the elders. I should have known that." Anyway I got called by one of the elders and the very first thing he said was, "We'd be glad to have him, but we can't take up any money." I told Brother Keeble what he said. And he said, "That's just fine. Just fine." So the place was just packed. And Brother Keeble preached and I mean he condemned everything from smoking cigarettes was bad to bad things. He may have thrown in 'going to the movies.' I mean ...but then men and women, mostly White women just came down the aisle just crying when he got through, making confessions. And then Brother Keeble said that, "The elders have decided that it's not best to take up an offering. And I respect the elders, but I do want to give you the address. Son, can you get me something here I need to, so I can give the address. Any of you that would like to send something to help these boys." Richard was with him and another little boy named James Webb. Said, "These boys are in school at the Nashville Christian Institute and somebody here just might have an offering that they'd like to give. But it would be a lot easier if we could just take it up, but the elders have decided it's not best. So I just want... It's okay if I can give the address." And wondered if that's okay. Brother Keeble wanted to take it up and so they took it up. [Laughs]

Oh, he was something. He'd get up right there at Ford Avenue. He'd get up and he'd say, "Thank God for Martin Luther King [*unclear*]. If it hadn't been for Martin Luther King, we'd still be riding on the back of the bus. Thank God for Dr. King." Oh course, at that time Black folk were into Dr. King, even the ones in the church that wanted to admit it, said, "Amen, amen." Well, that afternoon when most of the audience was White wherever he was, he never mentioned Martin Luther King's name. But he would say things like, "Thank God for the White brethren. Thank God for the White brethren. If it hadn't for them we'd still be running around in Africa jumping from limb to limb naked." And we'd be mad. And they'd laugh. Then he'd say, "Get the baskets boys. They ready." And we'd get the baskets and they'd be ready. He got his money. But that was hard to take. But I tell you what I came to appreciate. Franklin Forest and I were into his office, during his latter years. And we were talking to him about Lipscomb and about what happened and everything and how they called police on us back then. And we were saying to him, "Brother Keeble, you could stop this. You could stop this." And he looked at me and Florence and he said, "Do you think I'm doing this for me?" He said, "I'm doing this for you. You've got to go to school. If I don't do what I'm doing, the White brethren are going to stop giving money. And the Black brethren are not supporting this school." That was his thing.

V. Boyd: How do you, on that note, see Jack Evans appealing to the Black brothers, the Black church, if they don't support this, the older Black institutions are going to die?

Floyd Rose: Well, things have changed. Most of the money, when Jack came along, probably ninety percent of the money that was supporting Southwestern was coming from the White

churches through A.B. Isbell, who was a White president at the time. And, of course, probably eighty or ninety percent of the money at NCI came from the Whites. But all that's been changed. A great majority of the money that comes to support Southwestern comes from Blacks. And, of course, government grants that they didn't have in those early years, they get now. What was your question though?

V. Boyd: Is the Black church able to support an accredited senior college?

Floyd Rose: Well I think so, but I tell you what I think the problem's going to be. Unless Southwestern has a mission that is different from the others, it cannot survive if it's going to cost the same as the others. And it's just about there. And the facilities obviously are not nearly as nice. So what is it about Southwestern that is different enough to warrant the support of Black or White Christians if in fact everything is the same? Unless, why keep the doors open?

V. Boyd: What can be the mission to keep Southwestern open?

Floyd Rose: Well, I think it ought to, first of all, admit what that it is - a Black school. Be proud of that. And if it's going to be a place that trains Black preachers, say that's what it is. Say that. That's what this is here. And the girls can marry Black preachers. Just say what it is. Whatever it is, say what it is. I think that there is a place for a Black college, if it's going to really help keep alive the culture. We do, in fact, have a unique and different culture. I don't want us to lose our singing, if I may say it that way, or the zeal, the excitement, and enthusiasm that we bring to a worship hour. But I think that we ought to say we've got two brotherhoods - a White one and a Black one. Because we have, we've got at least two Churches of Christ. May have more, but I know about two. We've got a White one and we got a Black one. And we've got about 21 different groups within these groups that have no association or fellowship with each other. I just think we ought to be honest about what we have and what we're doing. Just say it. Now that don't make it right, but don't pretend that it does not exist. There's no such thing as just one Church of Christ nowhere.

V. Boyd: Who's doing great church work today?

Floyd Rose: Depends on what you call 'great church work.' If you're talking about baptizing people or if you're talking about feeding the hungry or clothing the naked, and doing ministry among the poor and disadvantaged, etc, I don't know who's doing that that's in the Church of Christ, but if you're talking about baptizing people then I would say Billy Washington, I'd say Faust in Baltimore, I'd say [unclear] Lane Church. They may be doing different kinds of ministry, at least they're involved in missionary work and that kind of thing. I'm really not sure about , I've never been to- let me back off - I've never been to Baltimore and I've never been to Ft. Lauderdale. I do know that they have large memberships, but I've never read anything about their work that is consistent with what Jesus said that he was expecting of people.

V. Boyd: Now using your second definition, who is showing promise for doing real ministry?

Floyd Rose: I really don't know, Vernon. I'm not sure about that because I haven't been invited to those large....

V. Boyd: Who's not large?

Floyd Rose: Who's doing it within Churches of Christ? I don't know. I can't recall right off the top of my head now whose really doing that.

V. Boyd: Well, you get an awful lot of invitations to preach. [*Floyd Rose:* Sure.] What are some of the more exciting places that you've been?

Floyd Rose: Exciting? Places that are exciting to me? Lake Geneva has been probably...

V. Boyd: That's not a church. I'm talking about local churches. What local churches do you know that are exciting?

Floyd Rose: I don't know of any. That are doing the kind of stuff that Jesus talked about? But let me be clear. They may be doing it and I don't know about it. Because when they call me to come in, for instance, I didn't know Oakland was into so much until I picked up the bulletin. Because when I was here. [*V. Boyd:* Unclear] But you are doing some things. You work in Africa and all the other things that you do and the work that you all support, but I'm saying unless I sit down and talk to you about that or read it in your bulletin I wouldn't of known that because when I was here I came to do what you asked me to do and then when I finished that I was gone. So I really don't know. And then a lot, then I have been invited to a lot of places and then a lot of places I haven't been invited to either so.

I'll tell you what we're doing in Toledo, in Valdosta. And really just beginning. First of all I want to make sure that we have a church without walls – without racial walls, without denominational walls, without culture walls, without class walls, and without gender walls. It's the Church at Pine Hill and we say it's a church without walls in its work and in its worship. Secondly, we not only encourage people to tithe, but then the church itself tithes. In other words, ten percent of all of the money that comes through that church is then set aside for benevolence and other ministries. We want to make sure that needs of people who are hurting now. Let me be clear about that. If you are an able bodied, we will not give you money, but we will find something for you to do so you can earn the money because we don't want to enable anybody, we want to help them. And sometimes when you enable them, you don't help them. And I'm excited about that. It's a small work. It began with just me and Peaches on the fifth of April and we have now an attendance of about 70 with a membership of maybe 30. The church there has not grown in nearly the proportions that the church grew in Toledo that I began. But I think quite honestly I made a mistake initially by advertising it as the Church of Christ at Pine Hill. I mean, we turned off people that would have been turned on. So while it is a congregation of the Church of Christ, it is simply referred to now as the Church at Pine Hill.

V. Boyd: Are you on the radio?

Floyd Rose: Everyday. Once a day, except on Mondays, I'm on twice. I have a fifteen minute radio program. And then on Monday from 7 - that's in the mornings – Monday through Friday from 9:45 until 10 and then on Sundays from 8:45 to 9. On Mondays I have an evening talk

show. It's called, "Talk Back from Georgia," where we deal with questions of interest of the day and invite people to call and express their opinions.

V. Boyd: How's it going?

Floyd Rose: Well, yeah, the most interesting one was the one where I invited the Church of Christ minister to talk about women's role in the church. I find it interesting that I invited John Iverson to speak on the subject and at the last minute he declined.

V. Boyd: He's over the River..?

Floyd Rose: No, he's at up on South Lee Street, called Southside Church of Christ.

V. Boyd: Is this Black?

Floyd Rose: Yes, Black, yeah.

V. Boyd: So you have how many Black Churches of Christ?

Floyd Rose: Let's see River Street, Eastside, West Adair, Westhill, and Southside, and I'm missing something – Southside, West Adair, Eastside, and West Hill and then, of course, you've got the Church at Pine Hill. They've got probably about five or six White churches in that area, some in Valdosta proper and some out. Of course, they've got more than that. Then they have several that they refer to as 'anti.' I don't, but that's how others do. See I don't care if about you being anti anything if you're not anti Jesus. I don't care if you have one cup or ten. I don't care about that. I don't think anybody ought to make anything a condition, a test of fellowship that Jesus didn't make a condition of salvation. I wish that was an original quote, but I think I got that one from Carl Catcherside [*spelling?*]. Off somebody. I like it though.

V. Boyd: Yes, Carl was an outstanding brother. I can't think of anything else to ask. Do you have anything else you want to add?

Floyd Rose: Nothing. [*Laughs*]

V. Boyd: In my process of getting myself educated, I really appreciate you giving me the time at Lake Geneva and here these two days. It's been very good.

Floyd Rose: You will never know what your friendship means to me and what it.... No, no, no, you just cast that aside, but I don't. Knowing you has been

End of tape

Tape 5 (mini-cassette in collection – one side only)

V. Boyd: This is tape number five with Floyd Rose, 28th of October and I'm talking about Lipscomb and Abilene. I'll just read the first paragraph. This is from our son-in-law, who is in the Business School down there, Monte Lynn. [*Reads*] "ACU has received a sizable donation for the purpose of ethnically diversifying our faculty. All disciplinary areas and administration too are of interest. In the College of Business Administration in particular," (where he is) "we are looking for a PhD economist, accountant management specialist for next year. As a related, but separate point, I am on the search committee for a new COBRA dean." That's his school. "The college is considering publicizing the faculty and dean openings in the *Christian Echo*." He wanted my opinion on that. But if they've got the money for that particular purpose, they are going all out to look for PhDs to ethnically diversify. I got a notice yesterday from Lipscomb. They're doing the same thing and sometimes in the past I've gotten calls, "Do I know PhDs, Black PhDs, that are faithful to the church." That's the criteria of the Church of Christ [*Floyd Rose: I know.*] that they want. Name some PhDs that you know of that.

Floyd Rose: I don't.

V. Boyd: But you said that the church is getting full of them. I'm not talking about honorary doctorate degrees.

Floyd Rose: But that's the one it's full of. We've got more honoraries than we have earned. [*V. Boyd: I know.*] No, I'm serious. And I think you might do well, you might do better if you simply went to that book that is published in Nashville and sent letters to the different churches. The *Echo* is not nearly as widely read as it used to be. All you've got to do is look in the back and see how many churches are in there now and even subscribing to it. I don't know. I haven't met that many PhDs in the Church of Christ.

V. Boyd: Dr. Green, what's his doctorate ...

Floyd Rose: And if they are in the Church of Christ, they're not Church of Christ, Church of Christ. Like Dr. Green....

V. Boyd: I understand. What's his doctorate in?

Floyd Rose: I don't know. And they've got several. Let me back up, let me back that up. They have several young preachers coming along though who have earned doctorate degrees and they're doing like counseling on the side and all that kind of stuff. You may find somebody like that. But now I don't know a single one of them that's conservative. How do you get a PhD where you're trained to think analytically and then be conservative like that? It's almost a contradiction.

V. Boyd: I know. But Abilene is not... [*Floyd Rose: I see.*] They want someone that will satisfy the brotherhood. [*Floyd Rose: Okay.*] And the brotherhood has some flexibility. You know the White church has some flexibility that the Black church doesn't have.

Floyd Rose: Well, if they're going to get a recommendation from Jack, then you may have a problem, you know.

V. Boyd: They know enough not always to check through Jack.

Floyd Rose: Okay. To be honest with you, somebody like Cornelius Crenshaw [*spelling?*] might be a better reference so far as this generation of young people than I am.

V. Boyd: Your first suggestion was what, take Mac Lynn's book?

Floyd Rose: Yeah, they've got just about every Black church in the country in it. To me that would be a better approach than the *Christian Echo* because this way you're going to get all the churches, just about all of them. The *Christian Echo*, you're not. You might can do a little ad in the *Christian Echo* too, but if I were really serious about it, it'd go the other way.

V. Boyd: Well, I wrote him back. That's the beautiful thing about email, you can just click a button and send it right back. And I told him that, yes, he could do that, but that there are a lot of Blacks far beyond that.

Floyd Rose: Oh yes, that never pick up the *Christian Echo*. They're still running an article by Brother Hogan.

V. Boyd: I haven't seen it in the last couple of years.

Floyd Rose: I did a thing on my daughter. I was surprised they printed it, but they did. It's just a commentary on one of my daughters, where she is now, what happened to her, and the strain that we had, and the hope that it would encourage others who were going through similar situations. But I don't know how widespread. I know it's not what it used to be.

V. Boyd: All right. Let's see. I...I think that's an excellent suggestion.

Floyd Rose: You got the latest one. [*V.Boyd:* Yeah.] Is it since '94? [*V. Boyd:* Yeah.] 'Cause I need to get another one. Oh, that's '97! Oh my God, where do I get that? Give me the address off of that right now. I want to order that.

Break in tape.

V. Boyd: Twenty- six members.

Floyd Rose: You know how many they had when I left there --- three hundred.

V. Boyd: Oh boy.

Floyd Rose: Isn't that sad?

V. Boyd: Yeah.

Floyd Rose: Let me show you some other drastic. [*shuffles through pages*] Georgia. Well...

V. Boyd: Boy, there's a ton of churches in Valdosta.

Floyd Rose: Oh yeah. That's way off. It's over seventy people now.

V. Boyd: Seventy now?

Floyd Rose: Oh yeah. That's wrong. It's way off. They don't have that many there, 185. .

V. Boyd: Well, that maybe a preacher count.

Floyd Rose: Oh yeah. It is. They probably count all the folks that used to be on the roll and that's dead and everything. When Daddy was on there, there were about 300 there at River Street. The Southside, they'd have more than that now. They've lost, most of their people have gone to what they call Forest [*V. Boyd:* Park?] Park. Where is the West Adair - 280. Now Brother Keeble baptized 163, I believe, the first year he held a meeting there, way back in 19...[*V. Boyd:* The thirties?] In the thirties and then he came back the very next year and baptized the exact same number which means that the church started out almost with 300 souls. West Hill - 28. Well, my little church will be in here next time. [*V. Boyd:* Yeah.] I guess they're going to list it with the Churches of Christ. They didn't list it like I sent it to the *Christian Echo*. I had the Church at Pine Hill. That's the way I sent it out there. They've just got it the Pine Hill Church of Christ. That's funny. Macon. Let me say how... Macon has a large...[*shuffles pages*] Oh, they've got a lot more than this. Maybe they have got that many members or maybe they just have an attendance form, but that place is full.

V. Boyd: Is that where Norman attended?

Floyd Rose: Mondaisy

V. Boyd: Well, where did Norman attend when he was in Macon?

Floyd Rose: Right there. It used to be Plant Street, but it's Central now. They built this building. Let me look on Simpson Street

V. Boyd: Georgia.

Floyd Rose: Atlanta. Simpson Street. They didn't list a number [*continues looking through book*] Turner Road is larger than Simpson Street. This other church out there where [*V. Boyd:* name unclear] Yeah.

V. Boyd: Greenbriar - 388

Floyd Rose: Where's that? Here is it. Now what did they do, like call and find out the update? How do they update?

V. Boyd: They don't call. Usually what Mack does is go to people in local area that are interested in this. And sometimes they are students that he has had or people that he knows that are interested in keeping up with. For instance, in Michigan, we have two people that spend a lot of time on this. So he gets the updates through these local guys. And I presume that is what he is doing at these other places. I don't think he has ever sent out to, a mail-out to all the churches.

Floyd Rose: Now Figueroa used to....[*V. Boyd:* Fifteen.] Oh, man. I don't think they've got that many. Let me see something [*name unclear*] – 260 I think that's about right. South Side, they don't have that many people there. [*V. Boyd:* From what I understand, they've been through some troubles.] I'm telling you, the key is flexibility. I ain't never had no church troubles. None. Because people don't have to agree with me.

V. Boyd: Are you saying Baccus is rigid? Is that part of his troubles lately?

Floyd Rose: You know what, I don't know, but I would assume in being around him that if he believes in something, that's it. But you've got to be...Let me tell you what a friend of mine was sharing with me, something that a friend of his shared with him. He owned a, was a part owner in a large building in San Francisco. And he said he was out there one day visiting with him and he felt this tremor and the guy never changed stride. He just kept on. He said, "Excuse me," he said, "What was that?" "Oh, an earthquake." He said, "Brother, you should know that this building is earthquake proof." "What do you mean, earthquake proof?" He said, "Well, when we built it, we built deep. Foundation was on solid rock. And then we built flexibility between each of the floors so when the wind blows and the earth quakes, it bends, but it doesn't break." I said, "I got it." So if you've got a secure foundation, but if you don't have any flexibility when the wind blows, it's just going to move. But if your foundation is secure and you're flexible then you can bend, but you don't have to break. And that to me said an awful lot. So at the church where I am, I tell everybody when you first come up there, I'm going to tell you now, "You see all those folks in there looking at you. You notice that they don't all look alike. Well, that's not by accident, that's by design. And in as much as God didn't make us all to look alike, we don't think He expects us all to think alike. So we might not see everything alike or like everything we see, but we're free here to see what we see in a fellowship of unconditional love for the differences that make no difference to God." See I don't have to be right. I'm more interested in being reconciled than I am in being right. And when you take that attitude, people are free and when people are free, they don't need to fight you.

V. Boyd: May that be in more hearts. [*Both laugh.*]

Floyd Rose: This is interesting. [*Shuffles more pages.*]

V. Boyd: Mack does a pretty good job with that. He updates it pretty constantly, but I have not been happy with Oakland because we tried to be bi-racial.

Floyd Rose: How would they do your church? Let me see....

V. Boyd: My point was I wanted some bi-racial identification. He doesn't have that in the character.

Floyd Rose: Oh, I see. What's B plus H.

V. Boyd: Well it's Black plus.... [*Floyd Rose: Hispanic?*] No. Well, you have to look at the key up front. [*Look for key*]

Floyd Rose: I've been there. Had a meeting there.

V. Boyd: The key [*Floyd Rose: A little further?*] There's a page that talks about characters.

Floyd Rose: Let me see this. We actually have members...so they've fewer members in '97 than they had in '79. Now is that broken down by race too?

V. Boyd: Yeah, here's the characters. Yes. [*turning pages*]

Floyd Rose: He's got it broken down in state by state, but not by...

V. Boyd: Well, now he had it someplace.

Floyd Rose: Where did I get that? They said they had 97,700 some Black ministers. That wasn't in the book.

V. Boyd: I don't remember. [*Phone rings.*]

Floyd Rose: I don't know. I got those figures from somebody.

V. Boyd: Go back. No. It's got to be someplace. He's dealing with.... The character, he doesn't have Black here listed. [*Both talking and turning pages.*] Well, it must be someplace in here he explains what he's doing.

Floyd Rose: So we had a 1,245,000 attendance and these are people who claim to be members. Not mainstream, and then the non- institutional...

V. Boyd: That's what you have down Florida way. [*Floyd Rose: Yeah. Wooo.*] Yeah, their strength is down that a way. It's got to be in that first introduction when he talks about Blacks. Using a 'B' as a designation, he's bound to say something about it. [*reading in book*] Here he's talking about groups here, [*phone rings*] but the Blacks would be the largest non-White.

Floyd Rose: I tell you what. I don't know where he got these figures from, but Jerry Taylor was telling me that the overwhelming majority of the people, who are in....

Break in tape.

V. Boyd: Now we're not talking about any names, but I have a problem that I want to ask you about. Get your judgment on. There are some Black preachers that have been immoral, sexually

immoral, that have a terrible reputation. It's not public many times, but everybody knows about it, you know, all those kind of things. Can you help me to deal with this?

Floyd Rose: Well, I tell you what I would do if I am aware of anybody who's like that, I would go to them.

V. Boyd: You're going to be Biblical on me, aren't you?

Floyd Rose: Well, I'm going to be what I believe Jesus to be. Let me tell you what I was taught a lesson on. A doctor, a Black doctor, named Dr. Buckley in Toledo. I went to him once. I was dissatisfied with another doctor and so I made an appointment to see him and decided to change doctors. As soon as I got there, got into his office and started talking to him, I began to talk about this other doctor. He stopped me and he said, "We have what we call "ethics," he used another term. Ethics - that was the last term. I'll get it in a minute. And he said, "We never talk about another doctor to a patient." He said, "It doesn't help the patient and it doesn't help us." And I thought about that and I also concluded that the best way to approach any issue is to do what Jesus would do, to say what Jesus would say. And I think that Jesus would encourage me to go to a brother who was leading whatever kind of life that's unacceptable, including one of immorality, and talk to them about it. If it does not change, I will, at least, have done what I felt in my heart was the right thing to do. It is certainly not a credit to the ministerial profession and it's not a credit to the church for preachers to live ragged and immoral lives. And under no circumstances would I condone it, but I would also hope to make a distinction between their conduct and their product. And try to discourage the conduct and embrace the product if in fact it is, if the product is good for the country, -I'm thinking about Clinton- good for the church.

V. Boyd: It's speaking in general terms, but I see a greater tolerance for immoral conduct among some preachers in the Black church then I do see in the White church.

Floyd Rose: Personally I don't know that. Let me, I'm not familiar with any Black preachers who are chasing women that I know about now. I was familiar with some of the older ministers for the years gone by. And then you have to also remember that I was gone a long time and since my return, the most influential among our preachers have not accepted me back within whatever that circle is. So I really wouldn't know. But I, as a matter of principle though, I believe that I would need to make a distinction between a man's conduct and his product. David's conduct was terrible and his product was the 23rd Psalm. God rejected his conduct, but he accepted his product. That should not in any way suggest that there is any tolerance at all, on my part, for immoral behavior on the part of preachers. That is totally and absolutely unacceptable and should not be tolerated. I'm not familiar with any that are like that.

V. Boyd: Well, this brings the issue around to Dr. King. [*Floyd Rose:* Sure.] I realize you that J. Edgar Hoover had his own biases and prejudices, but he claims to have documented this with Dr. King.

Floyd Rose: Well, I'm not surprised that Dr. King did not have an extramarital affair or an ongoing relationship. Let me tell you about what I learned about several years ago. I read a book and it was a book written by a psychologist. It was a woman. And she said that men who are

go-getters, great achievers, are also men with strong sex drives. And often they are not controlled and so they seek expression outside of their own marriage. Good men, but the same thing that drives them to achievement in whatever area they choose, is the same thing that makes them want to conquer women. That may have some validity to it. But I want to tell you what I told my sister, Sylvia, about Dr. King. She is the one that brought it to my attention about Dr. King's involvement with a doctor's wife in Phoenix or Tucson, Arizona, as reported by Drew Pearson in his column in the *Washington Post*. And she said, "I'm through with him. Look at that. I never would have thought he would have done it." And I said, "Well, let me tell you what my reaction is towards that. As great as Dr. King was, as famous as he was, as handsome as he was, I'm surprised that not more women were after him. I don't condone it, but I'm going to tell you what I told the, or what the blind man told the Pharisees. They said, 'Yeah, we concede that maybe this man, who gave you your sight, was Jesus. We'll concede that, but he was a devil.' The blind man said, 'Well, I don't know anything about that, but this one thing I know, I was blind, but now I see.' I don't know anything about Dr. King's marital or sexual affairs outside of his marriage, but the one thing I do I do know, when he came along I was on the back of the bus and when he left, I was on the front of the bus. That's what I know." So I will take a man's product even when I reject his conduct.

V. Boyd: Bill Clinton?

Floyd Rose: Well, I tell you what I didn't like. When he pointed his finger at me and every other American and said, "Listen to me, American people, I'm going to say this one more time. I have not had sexual relations with that woman." Miss Lewinsky. I didn't believe that and I turned to Peaches and I said, "He's lying." It's the way he said it. I don't think he should have said that because I thought then and I think now that he did it. Just like I think now and I thought then that O.J. Simpson did it. Now, I also make a distinction between the President's conduct and his product. Has he been good, in general, for Black Americans? And the answer to that is "yes," in my judgment. Has his conduct been reprehensible? Excusable? "No." Should he resign? Sometimes I think, yes. Just like the Baptist minister, [*V. Boyd*: *Lyons*] Lyons, the difference in Lyons' situation and the Clinton situation is the country ain't not going down the tubes. But in Lyons' case, the Baptist Convention is losing money, the school is going broke, people are holding their money. If he were any kind of man, in my judgment, he would resign and say, "I don't want to be," - even I haven't, well not yet, admits that he did. If he would say, "I know my forgiveness was sought after I got caught." So was Clinton's. It was sought after he got caught. But he would say, "I'm going to resign and if you want me back, ask me to come back, and I'll be glad to come back." But when a position is more important to you than the reason that you are in that position then you need to give it up for whatever reason.

But I know how tempting it is with women. After, between the time that my wife died and the time that I married Stell, women were just after me all over everywhere. It's just a natural thing, especially if you are an eligible bachelor. But that's different than being involved with somebody while you're married. I assume that's what you meant earlier.

V. Boyd: Yeah. Let me tell you about Charlie Tucker after Annie died. There was one lady, a good sister in the church, came over with a casserole dish, and knocked on the door. And she brought it to him, obviously courting him. But she was ready to move in and just take over and help him. You know, be his companion. She just knew that he needed a wife. And she was the

one. And the way she came into that house and was just ready to install herself was nerve.
Nervy. [*Both laugh.*]

End of tape