

Church Conference at St. Paul's Methodist Church, Cedar Rapids, IA 12/13/61

**MR. CHAIRMAN**<sup>1</sup> : "Ed Sears, who is a member of the board of trustees of this church, Mr. Sears."

**ED SEARS:** "MR. CHAIRMAN, I move the adoption of the following resolution: whereas St. Paul's Methodist Church is the fee title owner of lot two in the southwest quarter of the northwest quarter of section 24847 Linn County, IA and whereas the board of trustees of church property has recommended that the Quarterly conference of the church approve and accept the offer of Percy G. Harris and E. Lileah Harris to buy said real estate on the terms and conditions purposed by said Percy G. Harris and E. Lileah Harris and whereas the membership of St. Paul's Methodist Church has met in a special meeting on December 13, 1961, which meeting was legally and validly called to consider and act upon the offer of purchase herein before described. Now therefore be it resolved that the St. Paul's Methodist Church be and it does hereby accept the offer of purchase submitted by Percy G. Harris and E. Lileah Harris an executed copy of which is on file with the church officers and does hereby authorize the sale of said property to said Percy G. Harris and E. Lileah Harris. Be it further resolved that the Board of Trustees of St. Paul's Methodist Church be and they are authorized to take all necessary steps to carry out the action herein authorized, to accept said offer of purchase, and to sell said property as herein before authorized and to cause to be executed on behalf of St. Paul's Methodist Church, all deeds and other written instruments and papers of every kind and character needed or required to carry out the terms of this resolution and to convey the property to the purchasers thereof. You have this resolution dually prepared before you and a motion that it be adopted. Is there a second to this motion?"

**PERSON 2:** "I Second it."

**ED SEARS:** "Motion has been seconded and the question is before you. MR. CHAIRMAN?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:**"Right, Mr. Armstrong."

**MR. ARMSTRONG:** "MR. CHAIRMAN and members of the church. I've been a member of this church all my life and I can well remember that we have had many hot issues in this church during the years. I remember as a boy my father and mother discussing over the dinner table the hot issue that was involved when they were discussing what architect would build this church. There were a good many people in this church who felt that we should have a conventional church of the Gothic type. And then there were other members of the committee who felt that we should employ one, an architect Paul Lewis Sullivan, who did not build Gothic churches. The final outcome was that Lewis Sullivan was employed. He was, he turned out to

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<sup>1</sup> (1)The chairman is Dr. Charles F. Hempstead, Superintendent of the Cedar Rapids District of the Methodist Church.

be one of the most distinguished architects of his generation. He built us a church which was 50 or 100 years ahead of its time. And as a result of that, we have a church here today which while other Gothic churches are being torn down, as we see them down on fifth street even in this city, that is the Christian Education Building, and Gothic churches elsewhere are being demolished, we find ourselves here with a church which was far ahead of its time and in the present remodeling program will only require a very small amount of changes, minor changes, here or there to make it a suitable building for our church for many years to come. The point I am making is that while there was a very hot controversy in this church over that issue, it was settled and when after the vote was taken, everyone closed ranks and we marched on together.

And that has been the grand thing about this church in all the years. We have had hot issues in this church but we have not been 'yes' men in the church. We have been willing to discuss in a dispassionate and reasonable way matters which came before us and after those matters have been settled, we have gone forward. And there has never been a time when this church in all the years, even though we have discussed plenty of hot issues, and there have been a lot hotter ones than the ones that I have mentioned.

We have always gone forward in the spirit of brotherhood. And I believe that that same thing will characterize our meeting tonight. This is a hot issue. And it is a hot issue not because of Dr. Percy Harris, a Negro, who would like to buy a lot or because this is St. Paul's Church but is a hot issue because it's a world issue. There is a world issue today and that world issue is whether there are second rate people in the world. Whether the white race is a supreme race. And whether men and women are entitled a life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, regardless of their race, color, or creed. And that is the reason that we can't dodge this issue.

We might have people say, 'Well isn't too bad that this issue has come up in the church.' If it didn't rise today, it will rise tomorrow or next month and So I want to say to you that this is a big issue and it's a world issue and I think that we can discuss the issue in a dispassionate sort of way, without enmity or hate, and when the issue is settled, this church will continue to go forward.

Now certain questions have arisen and I would like to take a few of them up. First the question is asked, 'Who is Dr. Harris, who is Dr. Percy Harris and what is his background?' Percy Harris was born in the South (2) and at the age of three, his father was killed in an automobile accident (3) in which he almost lost his life. At the age of eleven, his mother died. And he came up to Waterloo, IA to live with his aunt. He, of necessity, had to work his way mostly through the upper part of grade school and largely through high school. When it came to college, mostly and almost entirely, through his own efforts, he went for two years to State Teachers' College and then he went to Washington, D.C., to start in at Howard University.

At Howard University, he was practically entirely dependent on his own efforts, and he worked in an apartment house, where he happened to meet Senator Guy Gillette and his wife, who were living in this apartment house in Washington, D.C.. Senator Gillette arranged for Percy

Harris to get a job in the Senate office building, (4) working from eleven p.m. to seven a.m. in the morning as a janitor. And there he worked his way and by that method, he worked his way through college, through Howard University, working from eleven p.m. to seven a.m. in the morning. He had some financial help from the student loan fund from Howard University.

When he finished his undergraduate work in the college, he started on to medical School. In medical school, he continued there. He was getting good grades in medical school and for four years he was elected president of his class in the medical school, something which had never been heard of before at Howard University. When he graduated, he continued with certain hospital work and intern work and finally he landed in Cedar Rapids as an intern at St. Luke's Hospital, which was the first time that I had ever laid eyes on him.

He was an intern at St. Luke's Hospital for a year and then later he was retained by the hospital to train certain foreign interns, who had come here as interns to work in St. Luke's Hospital. Later, he set up his practice here in Cedar Rapids and he is now slowly building up a practice in Cedar Rapids. A practice which would be much larger, which is good but which

(2) Born in Durant, Mississippi , on September 4, 1927 . (3) Father's auto accident occurred on June 6, 1930. (4) Correction. Cleaned the Senate offices in the Capitol Building.

would be much larger, if the color of his skin were different. But 98%, about 98% of his patients, are white and the balance are non whites, which is about the proportion that there is in Cedar Rapids.

Now I say to you, that there is the man and his family, whom we are talking about and I believe that in this Christian church when we see a man, whom we're not claiming to be a Superman, but a man who has gone through all that struggle, and who has overcome all the obstacles, probably more obstacles than any person in this room. I feel that that man, who is a brother member of this church, is not to be considered a second rate citizen, to live in the ghetto district of Cedar Rapids, but that he ought to be entitled when he wants to buy a lot and build a house according to a plan which he and his wife have seen in an architectural magazine.

I feel that this man as a Christian brother in this church should be given the opportunity to live where he wishes to live and if this man is good enough to become a member of St. Paul's Church and take the Oath of membership in this church, I believe that he is good enough to live beside me, or you, or any other member of this church and that is the issue and only issue involved here. All the other side issues of whether this was done this way or done that way or some other way are all secondary. This is the big issue that's involved. This is the issue that you are here to decide tonight.

Now the second question that is asked is this question. And this is a serious question and I certainly have the greatest respect for people who differ with me in these matters. I have the greatest respect for their difference. The question arises, 'Would such a move as this cause a

great depreciation in real estate values in the area?' Now it is one thing to have opinions on this subject and it is another thing for there to be a scientific study on what is the effect of the moving into an area of non whites on real estate values.

There have been some very thorough and scientific studies made in the United States on this very subject. And among these is a study made by highly placed group of scientists headed by Dr. Laurenti, Professor of Economics at the University of California at Berkeley. The title of this book is, "Property Values and Race." The whole series of books can be had for thirty dollars and they can be also had at the library. But this is the book which has the conclusions in it and anyone who is seriously interested in the effect of the movement of nonwhites into white areas, all you have to do is to read this book and a few other scientific treatises on this subject and you will be able to know what the truth is as distinct from opinions.

This book shows that in a study made all the way from the San Francisco bay area of Oakland, California and San Francisco. In seven cities, including the suburbs of Philadelphia, that in 85% of the areas, in 85% of the instances where non whites had moved into white areas, there had either been no change whatsoever, there had either had been no change whatsoever in real estate values or there had been an increase in the values in the years. The second thing that it showed that of the remaining 15%, of the remaining 15%, where there had been a slight decrease, the decrease had been in the amount of about 5 to 9 percent. Now these are factual studies and not opinions. And I think that anyone who is interested in this subject will find that this is borne out.

Many of you read the issue of the "Saturday Evening Post" which took up a four page article with pictures of the subject: When a Negro Moves into Your Neighborhood. And the conclusions that it reached were basically the same conclusions that were shown in this scientific study. Last Saturday, one of the men, who is one of the authorities on real estate appraisal in the city of Cedar Rapids and who is a specialist in real estate residential appraisal, came to me and said, 'I was visiting with a few of my Colleagues a few days ago and we discussed what would be the effect of a man, a Negro, moving into a white district. He said, 'We are very cold blooded and objective about our appraisals of real estate. And he makes scores and scores of appraisals all during the year. And he said, 'It was my conclusion and the conclusion of my colleagues that in this instance in the city of Cedar Rapids, the amount of difference in real estate values that would be, would result, would be practically negligible.'

Now that is the testimony of a man who is a expert in this field. It also happens that in this area we happen to have a wooded area of about 14 acres, which eventually we propose to plot and put into city lots. (someone in the background reminds the speaker that he has only one minute left to speak) And that area we have not the slightest notion that that is going to be depreciated. Now the question is asked, 'How come that you gave this property to the church rather than selling it to someone else and giving the money to the church?' Mrs. Armstrong and I discussed this matter and like many others decided that if we could give property to the church would it

appreciated in value, we could increase our contribution to the church in the amount of 50% and it was on that basis that we did this.

After the property had been appraised and accepted by the church, although while we had been working for years, for two years almost, trying to find a location for Dr. Harris. I approached Dr. Harris, having had no previous commitment whatsoever to him, told him that this lot was available at \$7,500.00. He said, 'That is more than I can afford to pay but it's between getting no lot at all and paying \$7,500.00, I'll go ahead and make an offer on it.' And so he did. Thank you very much, MR. CHAIRMAN."

**NEW PERSON::** MR. CHAIRMAN, I would like to know at least whether the market value was offered on the purchase of this property. It seems to me we should be entitled to the normal arrangements... (unclear).

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Does someone Want to speak to this question?"  
"Repeat your question."

(question is repeated, still very unclear. Person is asking to see a copy of the bid)

**MR CHAIRMAN::** "Do you have a copy of that here, Mr. Armstrong? The first question that was asked was whether or not this amount of money which has sold this property to, which you're offering to sell this property to Mr. Harris or is the market value of it. Now as I understood that was the problem, or the question."

**MR. ARMSTRONG:** "MR. CHAIRMAN, I would be glad to answer that question if I am asked for it. If you will redirect..."

**MR CHAIRMAN:** "This is just an answer to a question, this is not a debate."

(commotion)

**ANOTHER SPEAKER:** MR. CHAIRMAN, people can't hear unless we have the microphone."

"We can't hear anyway." (laughter)

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Well I think that this body will permit this. This is just an answer to a question. It has nothing to do with a debate."

**CHAIRMAN OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES:** "If any of the other members of the trustees wish to answer, I'll be glad to have them or I will answer as Chairman Of the Board of Trustees."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Can Kirby Stiers or another member of the board of trustees answer this?"

**ANOTHER SPEAKER:** "MR. CHAIRMAN. I would like to . . . ( unclear). . . if one of the members of the board of trustees can scan through it very quickly, that way..."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Do you have a copy of that? Now do you refer to the minutes of a meeting or what is it?"

**ANOTHER SPEAKER:** " No, it is an offer on file for this property and the terms thereof by which it is to be bought."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Is it possible to get this document?"

**ANOTHER SPEAKER:** "No, as a matter of fact..." (more commotion)

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "All right. (pounds the gavel) Starsko said that he had a copy. They asked that you present it to one of the members of the board of trustees and let him scan it over and then come and make a statement concerning it."

"Would one of the members of the board of trustees step forward?"

**STARSKO:** "All right." (laughter) "I think that I have seen this before. I trust that this is what you wish: For the sum of \$7,500.00 the party of the first part, the church, its successors, etc.. as follows: \$500.00 down..."

"Louder' repeated by several people

**STARSKO:** "I can't talk much louder. Is this thing working or not? Can it be fixed?" (pause as they attempt to remedy the problem with the microphone) "How is it now? For the sum of \$7,500.00, the church, I'll abbreviate this a bit if I may, to be paid as follows: \$500.00... on the execution of this agreement, \$2,000.00 on or before December 31, 1961 and the balance of \$5,000.00 and interest there on as herein provided in payment as follows: \$2,500.00 or more payable on or before the 31st day of December, 1962 and 1963 until all of said principle sum and interest on every part thereof at the rate of 6% per annum from date of possession payable annually is fully paid. Said payment is to be applied first in payment of all interest then accrued and the remainder on the said principle sum. The party of the second part, the purchaser, shall be entitled to possession of said premises on payment of \$2,500.00 and there after so long as he shall perform the obligations of this contract. Does that answer the question?"

?: "Thank you."

**TOM SMITH:** "MR. CHAIRMAN? I'm Tom Smith."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Are you going to debate the motion?"

**TOM SMITH:** "No sir, I have a question at this time."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Oh, all right. Yes."

**TOM SMITH:** "I assume that this property was going to the church... (unclear)... I have a question as to whether or not this property was advertised for bid, in another words, I would assume that the church wants to realize as much from this property as it possibly can. Was the property advertised to the public for bid or was it put up for public sale, as a lot?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "We'll have to ask some member of the board of trustees to answer that."

(pause)

"Sears, do you want to..."

**ED SEARS:** "It was not."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "All right. And there is nothing in the law of the church which requires it?"

**ED SEARS:** "I would say no."

**TOM SMITH?:** "That's terrible to give the rights to one person, a privilege. I don't think that I can like... (unclear)."

**ED SEARS:** "Before this property was turned over to the church, the two appraisers were appointed, including Mr. Howard Helscher and Tommy Tucker who is president of the real estate board. They acted on behalf of the church. And they made an appraisal of this property at \$16,900.00. I previously had had two appraisers representing Mrs. Armstrong and myself and they had appraised the property at \$17,000.00. Neither parties had communicated with each other but they arrived at that close figure.

The church appraisers, whom I have mentioned, appraised the property at \$16,900.00 and Mrs. Armstrong and I turned the lots, the parcel of land, into the church at \$16,500.00. Taking in each case the lower price that either the church appraiser or my own appraiser had appraised the property at.

The trustees then accepted the property at the price at \$16,500.00, credited our account with that amount and put up for sale one lot, the west lot, which is slightly smaller than the other lot and not in as quite a good position. Put that lot up, offered it for sale at \$7,500.00 and the other lot at \$9,500.00. That offer, after that offer was made, having worked for about two years seeking to find a cheaper locations for Dr. Harris, I went to Dr. Harris and I said, 'Look, the church is putting this property up, has offered it for sale at \$7,500.00. Are you interested in buying it?'

He said, 'That is more than I can afford, but I've tried time and again to buy other lots. Mrs. Armstrong and I had tried two months before to buy two lots at \$4,900.00 each for him and when they found out that it was for a Negro, then they rejected the offer. He said that rather than having no lot at all, we better pay \$2,500.00 more than I Ought to pay and so he prepared, had this contract prepared, and it was on that basis, on these appraised values, that we accepted, that this offer was made and accepted. When you turn over to your real estate man a property of a given price to sell, he takes it for granted that he may sell it at that price and when he finds the first buyer, he sells it to him. And he does not go out looking for numerous other buyers, having already found one buyer, which is all that is required."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Anyone Who Wants to speak to the question?"

**(Unknown):** "MR. CHAIRMAN, My question is, I'm confused, now one of the board of trustees says the property was not advertised and another has just implied that it was. (commotion) All right, I'm wrong. I would like to make one point. What the real estate people have to have heard estimate the value of this property and what people will often times pay for that property can very well be two different things. That's the reason I was curious as to why the church did not advertise this property in an effort to obtain or make as much money from the sale of this property as they possibly could?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Is there anyone else who wants to speak to this question?"

**(UNKNWON):** "MR. CHAIRMAN? I have a point of inquiry. I still do not know which lot is the subject of this sale, whether it is the west lot or the east lot and in memorandum of Mr. Armstrong, I received this mail. There seems to be some apparent discrepancy as to the evaluation. The way I read that memorandum, the east lot is valued at \$9,500.00 and that is the lot that is proposed to be sold for \$7,500.00. I was wondering if that was an error?"

**ED SEARS?:** "That was a typographical error made in the ... report. You are correct sir, it is the west lot. The lot that was always appraised at \$7,500.00... (unclear)... for sale at \$7,500.00."

**(UNKNOWN):** "What are the sizes of the lots?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Well, I suppose Mr. Armstrong ... (unclear)...yes?"

**(UNKNOWN):** "I move a waiver of the original rules of a limit of ten minutes and allow Mr. Armstrong to take any time to answer the questions. He is the man we want to hear from."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Well, that's all right, of course, as long as he is answering questions and not debating, then this ten minute limitation does not apply. But if you want to grant Mr. Armstrong the privilege of making any statement he wishes within the rights of this body... (unclear). You have a motion to this effect. Is there a second to that?" (pause) Well, I hear no second but...yes, pardon me."

**(UNKNOWN):** "I second the motion,"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "I'm sorry. All right it has been moved and seconded then that the privilege of the floor or the ten minute restriction on the debate be removed and the privilege of the floor be given to Mr. Armstrong in order to answer these questions which are being asked. Is that the gist of the ... ?"

**(UNKNOWN):** "Mr. Chairman?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Yes?"

**JACK HATT:** "I'm Jack Hatt and I believe that in the last two weeks we have heard a lot of conversation. There has been a lot of heartache. And I believe that we can not deliberate any longer. I believe that we are all here for one purpose to Come to. . ."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Just a minute, are you speaking to this motion here to grant an extension of time to Mr. Armstrong?"

**JACK HATT:** "MR. CHAIRMAN, I am not. I am moving that we (freeze?) this motion. I'm sorry, MR. CHAIRMAN."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "All right. You have this question before you. Is there any discussion? If not, as many of you as will Vote in favor of this extent or this granting of this privilege to Mr. Armstrong, will say aye."

"Aye." (by many)

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Opposed?"

"Aye!" (much louder than the group that favored the motion)

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "The chair is not clear as to what the vote was. I guess that we will have to have a showing of hands. Those of you who are in favor of the motion, will you lift your right hand? Those of you who are opposed?"

**(UNKNOWN):** "Right to a point of parliamentary procedures."

**MR. CHAIRMAN :** "Yes?"

**(UNKNOWN):**" I think that we should take this here vote... (unclear)." (groans from the crowd)

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "If this were to grant him special privilege for debate and to change the time of debate, that's why I raised this issue, Then you're perfectly right. If it is purely and simply to grant him an opportunity, which you do not have to grant, to answer questions, than I don't see where this applies. We are not changing the time of debate at all. We are just . . . Yes?"

**(UNKNOWN):** "If this is a suspension of the rules, then it has to have a two-thirds vote, if it is not a suspension of the rules, than it does not need any vote."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Well, you can correct me if you wish, but as far as I understand, any man can answer questions. It is only when there is debate that you have so..." (interrupted)

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN? How does this motion come out? Who won? (laughter and applause) I put it right to you. Who won?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Well, I haven't decided yet." (more laughter)

**UNKNOWN:** "How come you put one man down and you let another man speak? You don't even know who won the motion."

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Just a minute. This man still has the floor. I don't get your question."

**UNKNOWN** "I had the floor before . . . "

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Yes, that's right."

**UNKNOWN:** "All I want to know is who won?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "I say that the chair is still in doubt and we will have to have a count vote. That's the only way that we can decide this issue as far as I can see."

**UNKNOWN:** "Thank you, sir. MR. CHAIRMAN? My reason for rising this point of order is, I don't think that the body really wants to give Mr. Armstrong and make him a debater on this when he's just answering questions. I can see that if we start giving him additional time, we're going to have to give other people additional time and we'll spend all our day on policy and procedures. I think you were right and I would like to ask the man to withdraw the motion." (applause)

**UNKNOWN:** "I Will Withdraw the motion if Mr. Armstrong will answer the questions."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "All right. Are there any objections? Yes?"

**(UNKNOWN)** "I see everybody is talking about this. I don't believe that anyone that has been opposed to this has had an opportunity to talk. And I'm definitely opposed and . . . (unclear)" (applause)

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "This motion has been withdrawn and we are back on the original motion now and you have a right to the floor if you want to come down here to the microphone."

**G.O. Phillips:** "My name is G. O. Phillips. And I'm a resident of Cedar Rapids and I'm also a member of St. Paul's Church, for nearly all my life that I can remember. I'm not a public speaker but I'm not in favor of what is going on with this church. And I believe that the church is being made an object, well should we say of being the principle in an argument that should never have been brought forth to the church. (loud applause) I admire Mr. Armstrong. I admire his principles but I do not admire his judgement in this case. And that I'm opposed to it and I believe that is all that I can say at this time." (more applause)

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Are in favor of it or opposed?"

**(UNKNOWN):** "I'm in favor of it .. "

**MRS PAUL FINGER:** "I'm not a public speaker either. I just wanted to say that we are not debating Mr. Armstrong's principles tonight. We are debating Christian principles. And it's a basic Christian principle that we are all the children of God and that we are equally important to him. It's also an American principle that American citizens are all first class citizens. And let's not get this to be an issue of this is what Mr. Armstrong wants or this is what somebody else wants, but let's just consider it; What does God require of Christians?"

And let's not also forget that there will be publicity coming out of this meeting tonight that will have far reaching effects as to what a Christian church in an American City has decided. And this publicity will reach all over Iowa, and all over America, and into Russia, and communist nations. What is a Christian church in a supposedly Midwest Christian city going to decide about American citizens? That's the issue tonight." (a lot of applause)

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "May I ask, are you for or against?"

**MRS PAUL FINGER:** "I personally am for St. Paul's Church and I am very sorry that this occasion has come up. It is not good. Now you talk about Christian principles. All right. You've heard the story of the talents. Some people have more and some have less. Some use them better and some don't. Now when you take and put on this church the decision of making a public spectacle, it's a thing that never should have happened. And I assure you that there are very few churches where it ever would happen. I happen to know that it is wrong that this church should be made a scapegoat."

I'm not saying that anyone is to blame. I don't think that anyone intended it. I think St. Paul's Church would have been better to have refused this gift of real property. Far better than to allow the (criticisms?) that are going to occur from this. Now it isn't anything, you can't find anything in the Bible that will absolutely support the stand that has been taken here. God made people of all colors. Why didn't He make them all white?

Those are good arguments too. You didn't make these rules and I didn't make these rules. I happen to have people here that I know will probably be injured by our action here tonight. I have no desire to do it. I personally am not involved in this at all. Doesn't make a bit of difference to me personally how it happens, but I do not think that it is good business or good management for this thing to be thrust upon this church. It was a very, very, bad thing for the trustees to have allowed it. And I think that they should be criticized for it because they are trying to set up St. Paul's Church as a debating place for a racial issue.

Now you say that Khrushchev will learn about this, he won't ever hear about it. This is only one of the little tiny things in this great racial thing all over the country. Today I've been reading where the African Negroes do not like the American Negroes because they think they are better than they are. When people live in a neighborhood, they are at home with people of their own kind and their own status. And these things all work out whether we want them or not.

And you can't, by the bootstraps, raise someone up. Now I do not think there is anything wrong with Percy Harris. I've heard that theirs is a very good family, but I do not think that St. Paul's Church should elevate him to the highest pinnacle with the NAACP in this area. It's a great thing. If I were a crusader like he is, I would do exactly what he is doing. Now we've got to do something here tonight and I think that we should return this gift of real property to the donors and let the problem be where it should be. We should not have this thrust upon this membership, but why do we want to go through with it? It isn't worth it.

Our first interest should be St. Paul's Church and not any one individual, whether it be black or white. Why shouldn't we do that? Why should we be thrust upon? I don't want to vote on this thing at all. Why don't I want to? Because I don't want to vote against it and I don't want to vote for it. I know people on both Sides. I'm not interested in making this a decision. Let's pass it where it belongs, Somewhere else."

"Many people have raised the question as to whether this is good for the church to be involved in this kind of issue. And I want to speak to that question. When Mr. Armstrong first told me what he had done, my immediate reaction was one of thrill, of excitement, of joy, that a man had the courage to take this kind of stand. And to thank God that for once in my life, after preaching on this subject for years, somebody had taken me seriously enough to do something definite, a definite act. To me, it was a great opportunity for this church. A great opportunity for this church to witness for our belief in the equality of man under God. To me, it was a great opportunity to this church to speak out in the world, for so many other institutions are way ahead of the church in this matter of integration.

And I thank God that this opportunity had come. I was not prepared for the intensity or the bitterness of the discussion which has followed. But even if I had known that this was to be this way, I would still have felt that this was the thing for the church to do because the time has come, ladies and gentlemen, for judgement to begin in the household of God. We've got to decide once and for all whether we are a Christian church or whether we have completely abandoned Christian principles and have taken over the principles of the world. And this is the issue here.

Let's not be mistaken about it. This is the issue: Are we a Christian church or not? And if we are not, then this is a good time to decide it and get it decided definitely and not go on being hypocritical about it. If the majority of this church do not believe that people are equal in the sight of God, then let's say so to the world. I look at this congregation from a place where I stand Sunday after Sunday, and I can not believe that this congregation will not vote for this man. There will be nothing in my life which would ever break my heart as much as to have this congregation vote 'no' on this issue tonight." (a lot of applause)

"Nobody loves this church more than I and nobody has a bigger stake in this church than I. I have three children to support and to educate. My whole future rests in this church. And I'm willing to stake my future on this issue because I believe in it. We've been involved here in a plan to build a new building. And some people of good will, some people who love this church, and we all love this church. It's a great wonderful church. Some people of good will have said how sad it is that this has come. It may jeopardize this building. Well my friends, the purpose of this building is for Christian education and there are many different kinds of Christian education. And we are given an opportunity now, a God given opportunity, this opportunity would not come to a church once in a generation. We're given a God given opportunity to say something to this community, to this world, to our children, and to our children's children about where we stand and what we believe.

And this will do more for Christian education than we could do in months of teaching in this building. And I say to you my friends, that if you vote 'no' on this, it's going to take a long time to explain to the young people of this congregation. The young people under eighteen can not vote. If they were allowed to vote this issue, there would be no doubt of the outcome. And I do not envy anyone the necessity of explaining this to the young people if we vote 'no.'

This is not just St. Paul's Church here tonight. Let's be clear about that. This is not just a little family affair. This is the world, the whole world is here tonight. And this is one of the great problems of the world. And to say that the church should not be involved in facing the great problems of the world is to say that the church should not do its job. Where else should this problem be solved if not in the church?"

"Oh, I've prayed for this and I worked for this. And as I look out at you, I can not believe that you will fail the church or that you will fail the children and your children's children by voting the

wrong way. And all this is involved. I beg of you, do not think of your own personal whims or prejudices, but think of what it means to be a Christian church. Here is Dr. Harris, a member of this church, think of what it will mean if the other members of the church vote to refuse to sell this member of the church this lot. Think of what this does to the body of Christ. And pray. Do not vote before you pray. And vote that this church may be Christian on this very important issue. "

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN? I believe that I may have the floor now. "

**MR CHAIRMAN:** "Would you come up and . . .

**JACK HATT:** "I do not need the microphone. I believe that people can hear me. Ladies and gentlemen and fellow members of St. Paul's Methodist Church, I had promised my wife faithfully that before I left home tonight, I would retrain from getting on my feet because I get carried away sometimes I and wanted to keep embarrassment away from my lovely wife and my three children, but I tell you this, this thing has come into personalities, and I don't think that we should get into personalities. We should get into the basic facts of this. Now we have had one gentleman . . . (unclear) this man who is purchasing this property on the way he grew up.

Well ladies and gentlemen, I can tell you that you have a man right before you that went through more things than Percy Harris has ever gone through and there are people like him... (unclear, applause). . . pay attention to Jack Hatt but I want you to vote your conviction. What would you do if it was next door to you? Remember this, ladies and gentlemen, I came from Marion, over eight miles from here. I came from a family of ten. My father died in 1936. My father lost his leg in 1931. My folks ran a home laundry. I used to ... (unclear)... up and down this street with papers in the feet of my shoes so that they wouldn't get cold. My brother was a colonel in the Army from the first war, but he was a ... war and he had to send me his Army shoes and my other five brothers so that we had something to wear to school. Now we're getting into personalities and the church is no place for it. Now we have our minister that says he will resign or this will be the gravest thing if we do not vote for him. Ladies and gentlemen, ... (commotion, crowd yells to this person to sit down.)

**MINISTER:** "Mr. Chairman?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Just a minute, a point of order?"

**MINISTER:** "I just would like to correct that statement about ..." (interrupted)

**UNKNOWN:** "About resigning? I'm sorry, perhaps I shouldn't have said resign, but it would break his heart if you do not vote in favor of this. Is that true?"

**MINISTER:** "Yes. I will say that it will break my heart."

**JACK HATT:** "That's right. I'm sorry for the connotation that I made that you would resign. I'm sorry. But ladies and gentlemen, again I repeat this, that I have gone through the same thing that many of you people have. Would you people go to bat for me? For me, a man, a member of your St. Paul's Methodist, to get me a piece of property like this? I don't believe you would. And I'm just as much as a member. I've worked hard for St. Paul's for 14 years and I will continue to work hard for St. Paul's Church, but I think we've heard enough about this growing (unclear). I, MR. CHAIRMAN, would like to move the question."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "I think that you should have made your motion prior to your speech but. All right, you are still on the original motion."

**UNKNOWN:** "Did you call for a second on the (unclear)?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "No, I said that I raised a question concerning his right to make a motion after he had made a speech. Possibly a motion to, a motion for the previous question is in order at any time and if you wish I will call for a second on that . Is there?"

**UNKNOWN:** "Yes."

**UNKNOWN:** "The moves been seconded. Now this requires a two-thirds vote and it is not debatable. It is a motion which closes the debate. I want you to understand that. Therefore, there will be no debate from this time on. And I must put the question to the house. As many of you as will favor this motion to vote on the previous question Will lift a hand."

"I'd like a right to a point of order. Will you please restate the question in the form of the consequences so that people will know what they are voting on?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "The question is simply this: That if you vote in favor of this request for the previous question, then we will proceed immediately to vote On the main motion which is the (unclear) without further debate. That's what I mean to say, that this is folding debate. You should understand it."

**UNKNOWN:** "Will this be a hand raise or a ballot?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Well, the Robert's Rules of Order only require only either a voice or a hand vote and so I'm calling for a hand vote because it's a two-thirds vote and we'll have to count unless it's overwhelmingly apparent that this is what they want. There is a request here for Dr. Morgan. He is wanted at the hospital. And he is to call empire 401.01 extension 212, for Dr. Morgan. All right. Are we clear? We are voting now on the request for the previous question. As many of you as will favor this lift your right hand."

**UNKNOWN:** "Just a minute."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Is it a question?"

**UNKNOWN:** "Yeah, sure. I was wondering if we will vote in the same way as we did on the last One."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "I would have to rule, sir, that that particular question is rather frivolous and out of Order."

**UNKNOWN:** "How come you voted on it?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "As many of you as favor this request for the previous question will show their right hand?"

**UNKNOWN:** "What is the previous question?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "I'll try it again."

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN, if the vote could also be put as to whether they want to vote to debate or not. I think the people would understand... (unclear)."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "The motion for the previous question, is and has been stated here, is a motion actually to close debate on the main motion. And all you're doing is moving that we bring to a vote the main motion of the evening, one that was a resolution which was presented, and that is undebatable. What happens is that you close debate then on that main motion. Is that clear? Once again, as many of you as will favor this motion, calling for the previous question, will lift the right hand. I think that we will have to count this. Do we have tellers? Have tellers been designated? The ushers, will you come down and now I'll ask you if you will stand please? May I ask you one thing further? May I make one thing further clear? You understand that only persons who are members of St. Paul's Methodist Church, 18 years or older, are permitted to vote. And we will assume that everyone who is standing falls in that category. All right. Please begin counting."

**UNKNOWN:** "I don't think people understand how that standing indicates how they are voting. This means that the people standing are the ones that are going to vote?"

**CONGREGATION:** "No, no, no."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Everybody votes on the main motion. All we are doing is just deciding whether or not we will vote on the main motion."

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN. In due respect for you, I would like to say that I think that you have (unclear) and utterly confused all the people here. (comotion) This is such an important issue that we may handle through the church and I think we have the right to have things simple and direct, (unclear), and then when you ask the people voting if they understand the folks that are voting 'no' stay seated and then ... (unclear)..."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Well, I'll try again. All that you are doing now in voting is simply to decide whether or not you are ready now to vote on the original resolution. And you have a right as a body to decide whether or not you are ready to do that or if you want to continue debate on the original motion, then you vote against this motion to take up the previous question. If you are ready to close debate and to vote on the original motion, which is the resolution which was presented, then you vote in favor of this motion, calling for the previous question. Now, are you still confused?"

**CONGREGATION:** "YES!" (a lot of commotion)

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "All right. Let us come to order please. Yes?"

"I think why you are confusing these people is you think vote on previous questions. They think they are voting on previous questions. Could you repeat, quite specifically, we are only Voting to end conversation."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "That's right. Well, the Only thing is you can stop debate several ways. This is one way you can do it."

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN? Would you please state: All those who are in favor of discontinuing debate and vote on the original motion please stand?"  
(comotion)

"Excuse me, MR. CHAIRMAN, before a vote is taken, may I ask how many, would they please take a count of how many people represented here tonight are property owners?" (moans from the crowd)

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "I do not think that is pertaining to the question before us at all. Well, may I try once again? In the language of Mr. Robert's, who is the author of The Rules of Order by which most deliberative bodies govern their action. The object of the previous question is to bring the assembly at once to a vote on the immediately pending question which is the resolution and on such other pending questions as they be specified in the demand. It is the proper motion to use for this purpose whether the object is to adopt or to kill the proposition on which it is ordered, without further debate or motions to amend. Now that's clear to me. I don't know." (applause and laughter) -

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN. As a point of final clarification. Anyone who votes for this issue, the next and only thing that can follow this is the vote on the main issue."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Right. I said that. All right. Shall we try it again? Those of you who are in favor of this motion to vote, that is to stop debate, and to vote on the main question of the evening, the previous question, the pending question, the resolution, those of you who are in favor of that will you stand? (pause and comotion) All right, you may be seated. Those of you who are opposed?"

The chair would say that there is a two-thirds vote in favor of the vote on the previous question."

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Yes, sir?"

**UNKNOWN:** "I move that the vote on the main issue this evening be by a secret ballot."

**UNKNOWN:** "I Second."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "All right, you had the motion before you. We are now, this again is not debatable. You have a motion which has to do with the way in which this vote is to be taken. It is not an argument. It is perfectly in Order. And it has been duly Seconded. As many of you as will favor this motion that the vote be taken by ballot, that is by written ballot, which of Course is secret. Those of you in favor of that will lift a hand. Opposed? It is carried.

Now we are ready then for the question and you are now voting as members of St. Paul's Church, 18 years of age and over. I'm going to ask you to, all members, ... There is a request that the maker of the motion have the privilege of making a final statement which is perfectly in order. He has that right and so we'll call on Mr. Sears to make whatever statement he wishes, of course within the time limitations."

**ED SEARS:** "Thank you. All I would like to suggest is that you vote your convictions but you recall the the wide, wide issues, the religious issues, the Christian issues, that are involved in this and try to forget the si de issues. Thank you."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "All right, now I'm going to ask that everyone here who is a member of St. Paul's Church and as I say falls within the age limitations, will stand and remain standing until you have received your ballot. And then you may vote. If you are in favor of this resolution, you will write 'yes' on your ballot. If you are opposed to this resolution, you will write 'no' on your ballot. So will the members of the church, 18 years of age and over, Stand and receive their ballots?"

(a few minutes of activity)

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "When you have received your ballot, you may be seated and vote. Is someone passing out ballots here? Have they run out of ballots? Here are three, four sections with no ballots."

"Folks, if you'll please bear with us, This is rather a laborious process to be sure that we get enough ballots and not too many."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Once again may I remind you that only members are privileged to vote and we do request that any visitors who are here and not members of the church refrain from voting. This is for the members only. You are the you comprise the corporate body of this church."

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN. I would like to add that before we adjourn, ... (unclear). . ."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "All right, that was... (does not finish his thought). Will you come to order just a minute? There is a question being phrased here. I'd like to hear i t . Y es?"

**UNKOWN:** "When you vote . . . (unclear)... sign in, do you check our signatures? I feel that this vote is as important and I feel that while we do not have to show our ballots, I think that we ought to state our names at least, so that the record shows ... (unclear)."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "That was not proposed and we are under the will of the house here. All right, does everybody got a ballot? Anyone without a ballot? Then, Once again, will the members of this congregation only, vote. And if you are in favor of the resolution and possibly I better state this once again, whereby the board of trustees of this church are to be authorized to sell property to Percy G. Harris and E. Lileah Harris. If you are in favor of this resolution, then you vote 'yes.' If you are opposed to it, you vote 'no.' And will you stand as soon as you have voted and remain standing until the tellers have been able to or have collected your vote. Then we'll ask the tellers to retire and make a count. The request is the count vote be announced tonight and that a public accountant check the figures so if that is, if there is no objection to that. I don't see no objection to it. We will be here tham until this Vote is announced. "

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Yes?"

**UNKNOWN:** "Could we have the number of the people signed in so we know how ballots to expect?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Yes. All right, as you have voted now will you stand?"

**UNKOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN? I seriously question the legality of this vote without some way to check that those that are voting are registered members of St. Paul's. I happen to be an

attorney and I doubt if this title, the way this particular election is being carried out would be granted without a title. There is absolutely no way to know that the ones casting the ballots are those who are legally entitled to do so. In the absence of that this whole evening would be wasted, which would be a shame."

"Mr Chairman? Why don't all persons who aren't members be removed from this room?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "This body has a right to request that if they wish, but." "

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN?"

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Just a minute will you please? Yes? "

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN? I move that each ballot be signed by the person voting."

**UNKNOWN:** "I second that."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "You have decided by previous action that this will be by ballot and by secret ballot. You would have to reconsider that motion before I could ever change this one."

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN, it would be secret except to those who count the votes."

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN, ... (unclear)... envelopes to everyone and they put their name on the outside of the envelope, seal their ballots inside and then they all are opened and dumped and then counted."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Just a minute. I'd like to say just a word as the chairman here. We are up against this problem in every church deliberative body. Now if you want to establish a bar of this conference and have everyone checked in that is possible. It would mean, however, reversing this whole thing again. It is difficult for me to see how in a church body such as we have here where we have placed you on your honor as far as voting is concerned, it is difficult for me to see why that should be necessary, but if you want... (a lot of applause) Yes?"

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN? I am here sort of in a dual capacity. First of all, I'll have to report what's going on here tonight. The second thing is, I am called upon quite often to report on doings of the legal profession. Now I am no enemy of the legal profession. I have a great deal of respect and admiration for their abilities. It appears to me that this whole meeting this evening was brought about by a member of the legal profession and if this thing is conducted in any way in which a question can be put on the validity of the vote than we have laid ourselves wide open once again.

Once again we will be forced to meet as we are being met tonight. Once again cancel our votes if one man, may I remind, sir, that just one man, apparently raised the whole question of

whether we should be here tonight. If one man should cast a question on the legality of the balloting that we are doing tonight, then legally, once again, we would be required to show up again and go through the whole thing again. Therefore, I request that the chair comes up with some idea. . . (laughter interrupts speaker)."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "The only idea that would be absolutely fool proof as far as I know is to have every person in this house come down and file through the front of the church here. Pardon me, here is another urgent request for Dr. Foster. It's an operation. It is an emergency call. He is to call the hospital. And Dr. Huey is to call empire 38362. And Dr. Morgan is, pardon me, it's Dr. Foster again, all right. Now to come back to where I was. The only way in which you can guarantee it and this body has the right to do that, if you want to so designate, is to require each person here to file down and pass their vote and have the church secretary or your membership secretary or someone who has access to the church roll check your name off as you go by. (applause) Is that a motion?"

"Yes."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Is that a motion?"

**UNKNOWN:** "I Second the motipn."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "All right, it has been moved and seconded. All right, you have the motion before you and this is perfectly in order. Is there a question?"

**UNKNOWN:** "I have it on another point after this is taken care of. It's not a point of order, I assure you. It's something I think ... (unclear). . in your hands."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "As many of you as will favor this procedure for voting, and may I state it again, that everyone here who votes will have to come forward and deposit his ballot here at the front and have his name checked off from the roll. Everyone who is in favor of that lift your hand."

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN, a point of order. I can see that there have already been ballots cast and picked up.

How can... (interrupted)."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Have they been picked up?"

**UNKNOWN:** "Yes."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Well, then about the only thing we can do is to destroy these ballots and have you vote again."

(commotion)

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Are there any ballots which have not been picked up?"

**UNKNOWN:** "Yes!" "I've got some, one." (laughter)

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Well then, may I put it this way... (interrupted).

(Someone is talking but it is very muffled)

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "If there is any question concerning the legality of this vote, then I think that as a chair I will rule that we will vote or we will come forward and deposit our vote individually and be checked as to whether or not you are a qualified person to cast a vote. So, this will be our procedure. Now then, what we will need is to have the people whose votes have been picked up, stand to receive another ballot."

(a lot of commotion)

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN? A right to a point of order again. I want to say this, that I think this procedure is an unreasonable deprivation of my right to vote. I'm not going to stay here for as long as this will take to cast a vote so I will attack the validity of this vote myself because I'm not going to stay here this un reasonable length of time. "

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "May I have your attention please? Are those people who are still standing without ballots?"

"Yes."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** "Can we get some other people to get these ballots out quickly?"

**UNKNOWN:** "MR. CHAIRMAN? Are we to distribute white ballots or colored ballots?" (laughter)

END OF TAPE

Final Vote (751 persons voted): 460 Yes, 291 No. This meeting was not required but best. On May 22, 1962, a special meeting of the Quarterly Conference voted in favor of the sale; 40 yes and 1 opposed. On June 1, 1962, a building permit was issued for this property. An earlier application for a building permit ran into legal barriers. The Harris family moved into their new home on February 9, 1963.