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Subject: Stepping Away from JC

Good afternoon,

As you all know, I decided to take a step back from the church within the past couple months.

To be transparent, I waited to send this email because of the anger, frustration, and resentment that stirred within my heart when thinking about what I wanted to say. I want to start out by saying how appreciative I am of the connections I made, lessons I learned, and time I spent at Joshua Church. JC is the reason why I stayed in Austin, and in many reasons why I'm probably still alive today. The good memories I have gained will never be tainted by what JC became for me because I truly believe God had me there when He needed me to be. I'm so thankful for the time I spent on the church plant, and spending time with the people going, whether it was at retreat or meetings. For the time I was headed to England, those people really started to feel like family and I will forever be grateful for that. I have lifelong friendships that I've gained because of the church, and positive lessons that I will forever take with me. I want to thank each and every one of you for that.

As you also all know, I am too vocal and opinionated to let go without stating why I decided to leave. You all know that I am a very strong supporter of the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as standing up for other individuals and communities that are targeted due to white supremacy, systemic racism, homophobia, and ableism. I myself am not perfect. I try to learn and work every day to be better for those who are not cis, white, abled, and white brothers and sisters. I will never stand down from talking about how "Christians" need to be better for those individuals either. After a few team meetings I became tired of being stared in the eye when being told that there were "people in the church being divisive". I also grew tired of being treated like an "other" because of my past, my sins, my joys, my rape, my abuse, my mental illnesses, and my opinions. I never fit into the mold that Joshua Church, it's elders, and it's network created for it's members.

I'm not quiet, I don't allow men to rule me, I believe that every person (no matter the race, religion, gender, sexual preference, etc) deserves love and to be told about Jesus. As somebody who has many family members who are only alive and know Jesus because of the time they spent at half way houses, I also found it hard to be apart of a church that not only doesn't open the doors to that community, but shuts and locks them, and prays that they get shut down. Some say that that was the last straw.

Like I said before, other than the judgement, outcasting, and preaching outside of the gospel, I'm thankful for what Joshua Church was in my life. I'm thankful for so many of the friends and family I gained while being here. In many ways I miss the church, but just like somebody in staff told one of my good friends that he was "so glad that they left", there's a bigger part of me that is too.

I wish you all nothing but the best and will continue to pray against the hardening of your hearts, as well as mine.

Best wishes,
Morgan [redacted]