



GUEST ARTICLE

Crossroads Church of Christ disassociates from Boston Church of Christ movement

by Carol Giambalvo

At a congregational meeting on June 26, 1988, the Crossroads Church of Christ of Gainesville, Fla., officially disassociated from the Boston Church of Christ Movement, a/k/a Discipling Movement, a/k/a Multiplying Ministries. The elders cited concerns involving the Boston movement in the areas of usurping congregational autonomy, reconstructing churches, control of congregations by the Boston Church, the authority of leaders and the need to obey one's discipler in all matters (even in areas of opinion) as well as the recent changes in the structure of the movement that has resulted in a stronger pyramidal structure with Boston as the mother church. Kip McKean, of the Boston Church of Christ, in his new role of head of world missions, appears to experts outside the movement to be assuming the role of the Apostle Paul. Also of concern to the Crossroads elders was the issue of the rebaptism of all the elders (excepting one) in those congregations in the movement having elders.

Prior to this, the movement had been labelled the "Crossroads Movement" because it originated in the Crossroads Church of Christ by Chuck Lucas, who was a campus minister at the University of Florida.

Following the termination of Chuck Lucas by the Crossroads Church in August, 1985 for "recurring sins in his life," the leadership of the movement was taken over more by Kip McKean. McKean had been trained in the discipling methodology by Lucas while a student at the University of Florida. McKean and Roger Lamb had both been fired from their jobs as campus ministers in Charleston, Ill., by their sponsoring church, the Memorial Church of Christ of Houston, Tex., in April 1977. This happened at a time when the media began reporting mounting evidence of cultic practices and emotional manipulation by the movement. From Charleston, McKean moved to the Lexington Church of Christ in Lexington, Mass., and, using the discipling methods, the church expanded rapidly. As the church growth mounted, they soon out-



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grew the church facility and renamed themselves the Boston Church of Christ and are currently meeting in the Boston Gardens. Kip McKean improved on and embellished the practices of the movement with resulting changes in practices, jargon, doctrine and strategies: prayer partners became discipling partners, Soul Talks became Bible Talks, the control tightened and the hierarchical structure became more evident. McKean established House Churches, Zones, Pillar Churches, Capitol City Churches, Small City Churches, Countryside Churches; he reconstructed churches falling behind in baptisms and recalled their leaders to Boston for "further training." Many congregations were split by reconstruction, as members and evangelists had little choice on whether to become affiliated with the Boston movement as soon as they got a foot in the door. With each church in the movement, the emphasis is on total obedience (to leaders and to Boston), recruitment and baptism--and college campuses prove to be fertile

grounds.

The Boston Church of Christ movement is not to be confused with the United Church of Christ or the mainline Churches of Christ, out of which this movement sprang. The cultic movement can be distinguished from the mainline churches by its discipling techniques. In many cities where the Boston movement has affiliated congregations, there are also legitimate, mainline Churches of Christ. Besides the discipling method, clues to look for in the congregations are: age of congregation (the Boston movement churches tend to be young congregations); leadership in churches (most mainline churches have at least two elders, while the Boston movement only has elders at this time in the San Diego Church of Christ and the Boston Church of Christ).

As new leaders are trained in the Boston method, teams are sent off to other cities to establish a "church planting." Boston planted, among others, the Chicago Church of Christ, Central London Church of Christ, New York City (all the following cities are followed by "Church of Christ"), Providence, (R.I.), Central Toronto, Johannesburg (Africa), Central Paris, Stockholm, Bombay, Kingston (Jamaica). Information on other churches "replanted" or "reconstructed" (a term used for taking over the control of an existing church by Boston): is available from CAN. ♦

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