

Revolution Through Restoration II

by Kip McKean

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PREFACE

by Al Baird

"And a the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." Acts 2:47

"So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly."
Acts 6:7

"The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord." Acts 11:21

Revolution II is our first sequel to Kip McKean's article, "Revolution Through Restoration: From Jerusalem to Rome, From Boston to Moscow", which originally appeared in *Upside Down* magazine, April, 1992. Typically, movie sequels are rarely as good as the original. Kip's latest article, "Revolution Through Restoration II: The Twentieth Century Church"...is even better than the first.

Communication is a major challenge in every interpersonal dynamic. It is the major problem area in marriage as well as in churches. It is so very difficult to get everyone in every church around the world to grasp the big picture of what God is doing. Almost three baptisms per hour and two new churches a month in places we have seldom or never heard of staggers our minds. Kip has done an excellent job in this article of putting these events into perspective.

A few days ago I was interviewed via telephone by a newspaper reporter in London. He had heard that the United States Churches had just sent 50 evangelists to London to help the church there -- a major cause for alarm in his mind. Of course, I had to clarify for him that 50 disciples from Philadelphia and Washington D.C. had taken a vacation from their jobs to go to England to

help out for a couple of weeks in a summer campaign! The world has a hard time understanding such commitment.

In a question that revealed his skepticism, a reporter challenged me: "Surely you do not believe that your people will be able to grow from 1,000,000 disciples to 5,000,000 as easily as you did from 10,000 to 50,000, do you?" "Why not?" I replied. "Just as long as everyone continues to do his part it will happen." I have so much confidence that it will happen when I see what has already occurred. Your confidence will grow as well when you see the miracles of [our] church's growth ... dramatically show the...increase in the number of churches, the number of nations and attendance in just fifteen years. Truly God is good. It only gets better.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

In just 15 years, the Bible revolution, which began in June 1979 with thirty would-be disciples in a little Boston-area church, has multiplied by the power of God into 156 churches...attendance of almost 90,000 in 60...nations of the world!

Ten thousand strong gathered in the Los Angeles Sports Arena on Sunday, August 15, for the finale of the 1993 World Missions Leadership Conference. Only weeks before, the New York City Church celebrated their 10th anniversary with 8,000 worshipping in Madison Square Garden. Acts 4:4 reads, "...they continued to meet together in the temple courts...[and] Solomon's Colonnade...The Lord added to their number daily...and the number of men grew to about 5,000."

Just this past year Arturo Gandara, a minister in one of the world's most prominent denominational churches, heard about the revolution through restoration of the Bible. He came and saw the L.A. Church services. Inspired, yet shaken from the differences, he and his wife, Jolie, intensely studied the Scriptures for three weeks. Arturo then resigned from his position, and he and Jolie were baptized as disciples of Jesus. Presently, the Gandaras lead the most fruitful of the 10 regions of the L.A. Church, and, Lord willing, will plant the Guatemala City Church this autumn. Acts 6:7 reads, "So the word of God spread. The number of disciples increased rapidly and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith."

The Manila Christian Church and the Moscow Church of Christ both have 3,000 in attendance on Sundays. The Moscow Church is redefining Christianity in Russia as it is now the largest single congregation of any affiliation in the Commonwealth of Independent States. Acts 9:31 reads, "the [church] was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord."

The Australian Broadcasting Company, the British Broadcasting Company, *Time* magazine, Germany's *Der Spiegel* magazine, the *Times of India*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Bangkok Post*, 20/20, CNN and countless local TV news shows and newspapers have sent reporters to circle the globe to cover the controversy surrounding our fellowship. Acts 28:22 reads, "People everywhere are talking against this sect."

In just 15 years, the Bible revolution, which began in June 1979 with 30 would-be disciples in a little Boston-area church, has multiplied by the power of God into 156 churches with a collective

attendance of almost 90,000 in 60 of the approximately 200 nations of the world! The parallels to the book of Acts unmistakably mark this movement to be of God.

Revolution was and is in each step and breath of those who dare to embrace the true church of Jesus. The true church transforms from mere talk to spiritual reality only when two or three--or 10,000--fall on their knees in the name of Jesus to pray for direction, recognizing that "the present denominational systems" are in scriptural error, missionless, spiritless, and, thus, unable to accomplish the purposes of God. It matters not whether the community of Christ gathers in homes, synagogues, catacombs, coliseums or even "church buildings." The true church is composed only of people who have Jesus as their King, their Lord--baptized disciples. For God's church is spiritually his kingdom on earth. (It is not, as some denominations practice, a democracy of the membership.)

Some have said, "You are so narrow minded to believe the 'one church' concept." Yet, Jesus had but one physical body on earth. Paul taught that the collective, true churches form one body (Ephesians 4:4) and that every disciple is baptized into the one body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). For by his grace, God washes each believer in his son's cleansing blood in baptism and simultaneously adds them to the one body universal. As Jesus' mission in the flesh was to seek and to save the lost, so it is the church's (disciples') God given mission. When the church has any other mission, or none at all, it ceases to be God's church.

SECTION 2: THE MOVEMENT OF GOD

"Are the people in the International Churches of Christ the only ones who are saved?" is perhaps the most often asked question by truth seekers, the media and our critics alike.

The Bible's answer is revealed not in a single verse, but in understanding the nature of God's movements from Moses to Jesus. Generally, all movements transition through five stages: Man, Message, Momentum, Maintenance, and Monument. To initiate his movement, God, in his grace, always works through a man. He puts his message on this man's heart. As God's man preaches God's message, God moves in other men's hearts to collectively come together to follow God through the leadership of his man. This produces momentum. The fourth stage of a movement is maintenance, which is accomplished by the selection of men and women to help lead the swelling numbers of God's people to fulfill his goal (Exodus 18).

As the movement matures, the leadership comes to an unavoidable fork in the road: whether to build a monument to themselves or to build an altar to God and continue as living sacrifices (Romans 12:12). As with King Saul, a monument means the death of a movement (1 Samuel 15:12) because the leadership ultimately glories in itself and its accomplishments rather than in God. God would rather destroy his movement when it becomes ungodly--tolerant of sin and cowardice--than to compromise his righteousness.

I believe, ultimately, this is why no Christian movement has evangelized the entire world in a single generation since the first century. The only option is the altar where, like King David, the leaders fall down before God to crucify personal glorification, repenting of all sin, thus indefinitely sustaining God's movement (1 Samuel 24).

I believe with all my heart that the Boston Movement is God's modern-day movement. For the past several years, through love, prayer, Bible study and intense conversations, we have tried to pull into God's movement the remnant of all those who are surrendered to the Scriptures and who believe God's dream is to evangelize the world in one generation. We will continue to seek other isolated disciples who may be members in false churches.

Theoretically, anyone can read and understand from the Word of God that to become a true Christian he must respond to the cross, repent of sins, make a decision to be a disciple and be baptized for the remission of sins. However, because most people are blinded by their inherited traditions, this person is rare indeed. I have traveled around the world many times through many nations, and while I have found individuals who have decided to be disciples, I know of no church, no fellowship, no movement that teaches and practices these biblical requirements of obedience to the truth. Perhaps most revealing is that even our religious enemies and the media see us as doctrinally unique.

Conversely, most of us in the Boston Movement, now called the International Churches of Christ, fail to appreciate the characteristics that make our fellowship unique. This is particularly true when it comes to understanding our roots.

The Protestant Reformation in the 1500s through Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, ignited church movements that focused on the Bible and away from the traditions of the Catholic church. The mainline Churches of Christ were begun in the early 1800s by Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone. Their plea was simply to restore the first century church as seen in the book of Acts and in the Epistles. Though this group eventually splintered into many factions, their original plea was still noble.

In the 1960s, the "discipling movement," or the "shepherding movement"--the overseeing of one person by another--was first seen in Pentecostal churches. A number of the Church of Christ developed the shepherding of Christians by other Christians in the campus fellowship based on the "one another" passages such as "serve one another" (Galatians 5:13), "encourage one another" (Hebrews 3:13), and "instruct one another" (Romans 15:14).

Having acquired a genuine faith in Christ in high school through a fundamentalist Methodist church, I repented and was baptized at the 14th Street Church. Therefore, I appreciated all the more the involvement in my life of other Christians to call me higher in my daily walk with God. However, nowhere in the '60s or '70s was there found even a single church in which everyone in all age groups was totally committed.

Some have mistakenly thought that since the term "discipling movement" was synonymous with the "campus ministry movement," everyone in the campus ministries must have been called to be a disciple and been baptized. This was not the case. The confusion comes when one looks back two decades assuming that discipling ("shepherding") was done only with people who were disciples. This was not true. The words "disciple" and "discipling" do have the same root; however, conceptually and practically in these ministries, they were not connected. "Discipling ministry," for the most part, simply meant shepherding--involvement in each other's lives. It is true that the campus ministries in these mainline churches, like Crossroads, were composed of "fired up" students. It was common for those students to criticize and complain about the

lukewarm and uncommitted adults. Even so, not everyone in the student group was a true, baptized disciple as the Bible teaches.

In fact, one of the greatest controversies began in the early days of the Boston Movement when several of the people who had been involved in these campus ministries were rebaptized as disciples in Boston Movement churches. Not until June of 1979 at the Lexington Church of Christ, later renamed the Boston Church of Christ, did any church dare call and require every member to be, in the terminology of that day, "totally committed." A few months later, the doctrine from God's Word in Acts 11:26, "Saved = Christian = Disciple," was crystallized and thus restored.

I composed this controversial equation to convict and help individuals with a denominational church background to see that they were not true Christians. In this way I was able to explain to them from the Bible that there was a greater difference between the Lexington (Boston) Church and their denomination than baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. In retrospect, this restored doctrine was the beginning of the formal split between the Boston churches and the mainline Church of Christ.

The Boston Church was built on this revolutionary conviction that to become a member every person needed to make the decision to become a disciple and then be baptized. Then early in 1982, the Lord put on my heart a revolutionary plan to evangelize the world. First we would send small groups of disciples (church plantings) from the Boston Church into the major cities of the world. Then from these pillar churches we would send out church plantings to all the nations influenced by these major cities. These churches became known as the Boston Movement, a church movement built on the following convictions:

1. Jesus is our one and only Lord, resurrected from the dead on the third day;
2. the Bible is the only inspired and inerrant Word of God;
3. only baptized disciples are members of the true church;
4. after baptism every Christian needs to be disciplined--called to obey the Scriptures by other Christians (Matthew 28:18-20); and
5. every disciple must be committed to the vision of taking God's Word to build churches of disciples God's church--in every nation in this generation.

A letter I received a short time ago from a woman in Indianapolis who was baptized in a mainline church's campus ministry in 1974 illustrates these distinctions. She wrote, "I was not 100% committed to what was going on in Boston for various reasons. [However] your talk about the history of the Boston Movement helped me understand there has never been since the first century a unified group of disciples in a single church doing the work of evangelizing the world until Boston. Then I was able to see that no man could move this movement. It had to be God...This is what [my husband and I] have been looking for all our lives. We can't wait for great things to happen here like they are happening all over the world."

The Lord allowed me to begin the restoration of the New Testament church from a small group of 30 would be disciples in the Gempel's living room in June of 1979 in Boston. With the incredible increase in Boston and our first church plantings growing rapidly in cities traditionally considered hard to evangelize, in the early '80s we were praised more than criticized. Acts 2:47 reads, "They enjoyed the favor of all the people." Those who praised us included denominational

church growth experts, as well as leaders in the splintered groups of the Christian Church and the mainline Churches of Christ. The different elements of the traditional Churches of Christ included: the bus ministry influenced churches (Garnett Road in Tulsa, Oklahoma; Williamstown in West Virginia; and Lindbergh Road in Anderson, Indiana); Crossroads campus ministry churches; Milton Jones campus ministry churches; Springfield, Missouri, (John Wilson, Tom Jones) campus ministry churches; Stanley Shipp influenced churches; one cup churches; anti-Sunday School churches; the "black Churches of Christ"; Christian colleges and schools of preaching (of special note were Sunset and Preston Road in Texas). Over time their accolades for our growth decreased as our uniqueness became more doctrinally and practically defined. This was a movement--we were moving back to the Bible doctrinally, and we were moving forward around the world.

God expanded the movement by one church planting another church that plants another church, thus multiplying churches (another element unique to our movement). Opposition soon arose because the multiplication of our churches threatened the validity of the ministries of those who had praised us. The opposition greatly intensified when the Bible doctrine of "one church--one city" was restored (Revelation 2-3). The implication became: if the Boston churches were of God, their own churches were not. They drew this implication themselves which, in retrospect, was true.

Many of these church leaders became our enemies to protect "their churches"--their kingdoms. Other enemies, like Jerry Jones and Jim Condon, were people who "joined up" with the Boston Church because of our dynamic growth, only to realize that we were moving doctrinally away from Church of Christ dogma. The majority of the campus ministry leaders and members of those congregations (including Crossroads) did not "join" us. Some who had quickly "joined up" with us, not realizing the extent of differences in our life and doctrine, in time also opposed us, like Rick Bauer.

It is interesting to me that now these people have "yoked" themselves with deprogrammers, such as Steve Hassan, who is a nonbeliever in Christ, in a Herod/Pilate type relationship. However, the Holy Spirit led the few good hearted individuals--the remnant --to the Boston churches, especially our first three plantings: Chicago, London and New York.

Today when any member of the International Churches of Christ looks around in the local fellowship he or she was converted into, he or she sees only committed disciples--this fellowship could not have been seen before 1979. God says we are to judge a man and we are to judge a church by its fruit (Matthew 7). Denominational churches are dying. The mainline Church of Christ is dead. The campus ministry movement is essentially nonexistent. A while ago, the Crossroads Church even changed its name. Furthermore, The Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1994, states that there has been essentially no cumulative growth in the churches in either of these two nations.

The Greek word for "church" in the Bible is ecclesia, which literally means "the called out." Today, we are calling out of the world, calling out of the denominations, out of the mainline churches, out of the campus ministries all the people who desire to be part of God's restored true church and movement.

SECTION 3: THE FAMILY OF GOD

The Greek word KOINONIA means "communion" or "fellowship." As a church, we are not a human organization or institution, but we literally are the family of God (Ephesians 2:19-20). Each of us is born again at baptism (John 3:5). We become God's adopted sons and daughters through the blood of Christ and by his Holy Spirit. Thus, we have each other as brothers and sisters and God as our Father. Human families are very conscious of physical appearance and race. However, God's family is colorblind. For example, even before apartheid fell in South Africa, the Johannesburg Church did not consider of importance of whether one was black, or white. One is hugged in the fellowship regardless of color. The shade of one's skin, nationality, language, social status, worldly wealth or lack of it, are no basis for distinction in the church universal. As we grow, the leadership of our churches increasingly reflect the demographics of their cities, and nationals are rapidly rising up to lead in their home countries.

Even in the World Sector Leader couple, Cory and Megan Blackwell, are Black. (Their charge is to lead the evangelization of the Middle East. The Bairds are now leaders of the Media and Law World Sector.) Most denominational congregations are predominantly only one skin color or one nationality or one economic group. The Bible teaches we can be confident that these "churches" are not of God. Other "churches" often only pay lip service to the multiracial, international communion of believers. However, in all of the International Churches of Christ, koinonia is a reality. For example, in the L.A. Church, we have 17% Asian, 18% Black, 41% Caucasian, 23% Latin and 1% Native American. This is true biblical koinonia. Certainly to leave the family of God, the true church, is to leave God. Many who depart are deceived by Satan into believing they can be a part of a "church" that has false doctrine and unholy lives and still be saved. This just simply is not true. In fact, why would a faithful disciple want to be part of a congregation not made up entirely of disciples? Why do people leave the church? Primarily because their faith or trust has been destroyed. One of the exciting aspects for us as young Christians is being able to forgive all the sins committed against us, thus freeing us to trust people again. However, these same young Christians can idealize someone in the church, particularly leaders, and when they see something or someone not meeting their expectations, they can become critical. This critical spirit can lead to bitterness that could cause them to fall away (Hebrews 12:15). Like God's ordained relationship of marriage (and we are married to Christ, Romans 7), the people who are joined together in the God made relationships of marriage from time to time have strong disagreements--"fights." One could conclude, as many young people have today, that the problem is God's plan of marriage. Absolutely not. The problem is that marriage brings two sinners together and when two sinners are brought together, even Christian ones, they will eventually succumb to their sinful nature. This is not a "personality conflict." This is sin. Likewise, the church is God's creation. The people in the church, even the leaders, though forgiven at baptism, are still in their flesh--sinners. A leader should always strive to live by example, but we should not become disillusioned when a leader does not totally live up to the ideals of Christ, or even falls away. Ultimately, our primary allegiance is to Christ and not to a man. Distinct in our fellowship is the practice of the biblical concepts of being open with our lives and challenging each other. In Christian love, any disciple can and should approach another disciple, even a leader, and gently confront that which is not of Christ--sin (Galatians 6:12). Leaders are not given special treatment. Sin is only addressed publicly when a Christian, including a leader, fails to repent after steps one and two of Matthew 18:15-17 have been

applied. Deprogrammers, like Satan (for these people are his instruments), try to destroy the faith of disciples by undermining their trust in the leadership and doctrines of the church. If you, as a disciple, have qualms or quiet reservations or attitudes or hurt feelings, do not let the lion, Satan, get a foothold; open up and get help, because you are a prime candidate to fall away and be devoured by him (1 Peter 5:8-9).

Critics have noted that people who leave the church have a tendency to be very bitter. Once more, this should not surprise us. Divorce without bitterness is rare. Likewise, when one walks away from a total commitment to God, away from the most important relationship any human being can have, including marriage, then, there is bound to be confusion, hurt, and a tendency to be bitter and to blame the people in the church, thus justifying one's leaving.

SECTION 4: THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE -- UNITY

The church the Spirit builds is a unified family. Disunity is not of God. Sweating drops of blood, Jesus spent his last prayer time with his Father before the crucifixion begging for the unity that would clearly signify and distinguish his true followers (John 17:20-23). Throughout his ministry, Jesus continually admonished his disciples to deny themselves for him and for one another. The Holy Spirit through Paul reminds us to "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3).

This kind of unity does not just happen, it must be forged--as God's people allow His Spirit through the Word to take precedence over their spirit of pride, selfishness, envy, anger, resentment and all other sins that divide people. This is why we each so desperately need discipling relationships in which we talk about the issues that are on our hearts. Our movement has often been criticized for being so unified. People who do not understand spiritual unity attempt to explain it away by calling us "cultic" or "brainwashed." Yet this unity remains, in view of Jesus' prayer, one of the great identifying marks of a church of true disciples. There simply is no other way to explain the incredible family unity among the tens of thousands of disciples around the world, except to say it is of the Spirit.

"Family" also means being able to live with one another's weaknesses. The Bible teaches that we should accept our brother whose faith is weak, and we must not look down on him, nor should we judge the brother who disagrees in disputable matters (Romans 14). Three areas of great controversy through the centuries are the Christian's view of "wine, women and song." Because Jesus created wine as his first miracle and drank wine when celebrating the Lord's Supper, drinking wine is not a sin. Titus 2:3 teaches that we should not be given to much wine, implying that some is okay. However, if one drinks too much, it is sin--drunkenness. This is my personal conviction. However, I have brothers whose consciences will not allow them to drink any alcohol. I must fully accept them; and they must fully accept me.

My personal conviction is that in the early days of the first century church, musical instruments were used in worship as they had been in the synagogue and the temple, for this is where the Christians initially worshipped. Psalm 150 teaches that we should praise God with the trumpet, the harp, cymbals, and even dancing--yes, dancing.

Some have argued that this teaching passed with the old covenant, but we must remember the Old Testament was the Bible of our first century brothers. Second, others have noted the silence in the New Testament of the use of musical instruments in worship. This is not a binding example because the New Testament never specifically prohibits the use of instruments--or church buildings, for that matter. Where there was a change from the Old Testament, the New Testament always speaks clearly of the change.

For example, we are strongly admonished that the sacrificing of animals to cover sin is of the old covenant. Jesus is now our sacrifice (Hebrews 9-10). A Capella singing is beautiful and can be done any place, any time. Therefore, it will continue to have a prominent place in all our worship services, small and large. I realize this is a disputable matter. I must not look down on those who disagree with me, and they must not judge me for my convictions.

As for the women's role in the church, we have believed and practiced increasingly strong women's leadership roles in the women's ministry since the beginning. For this we are especially indebted to Elena McKean and Pat Gempel. Women sharing in the worship service seems to be appropriate and evangelistically prudent for our times (1 Chronicles 12:32). I do believe that women should not have an authoritative position over men in the worship service (1 Timothy 2:12). However, women did speak in the early church (1 Corinthians 11:5). Some may agree with me, some may not.

Also, Matthew 28:19 calls every Christian to make disciples and calls every Christian to baptize. We do not believe in clergy or laity, for, like Luther, we believe in the priesthood of all believers--men and women. We have always allowed any man, not just a minister, to baptize. As of this past year, once more smashing a sacred "tradition of men" (not women), we now encourage women to baptize the women. Some may agree with me, and some may not. The challenge for all of us as brothers and sisters in the Lord is to continue to keep an open Bible, an open mind and an open heart, neither looking down on each other, nor judging each other in disputable matters. Then we will achieve that fragile, but incredibly powerful witness of unity, love for one another, the primary identifying mark of a true Christian church (John 13:34-35).

A very sad chapter in our history was written in March of this year. Ed Powers, the lead evangelist of the Indianapolis Church of Christ, like Korah, being filled with bitterness and selfish ambition, deceived the entire congregation and caused many to lose their faith and turn away from God. Several World Sector Leaders, namely Doug Arthur, Al Baird, Marty Fuqua, Bob Gempel and I flew to Indianapolis to confront this division in the body of Christ. The victory is that 220 of 700 remained faithful to God, his church and his movement. As for those who continue to oppose us, they are lost--not because their baptism became invalid, but the Scriptures are clear that those who oppose and grumble against God's leaders and divide God's church are, in fact, opposing God (Exodus 16:8; Numbers 16). Thus, the rebellious become lost because they do not have a true faith.

Dissension in the body of Christ is never godly, but I believe that God allowed this division to happen to show us all that we need more communication and more contact between churches. Peter admonished the churches to "love the [one] brotherhood" (1 Peter 2:17). The evangelists in the first century constantly worked to stay emotionally and spiritually close to one another and

the key members in their churches (Romans 16:116). Today, as God's leaders, we must restore with the same zeal these relationships that create and sustain brotherhood.

Out of this sad chapter came the progressive idea of changing UpsideDown magazine into a video magazine called KNN--Kingdom News Network--to be produced by Al Baird, Anthony and Saun Galang and Roger Lamb. We also plan to produce this video magazine in several different languages. We have just completed the first KNN productions in English and Spanish. In turn, we will expand the L.A. Bulletin for written communication between the churches.

The official history of the Boston Movement has been documented through the Boston Bulletin 1980-1993 and will be documented in the L.A. Bulletin for the foreseeable future. We believe the new video magazine communicates to the '90s generation in a very '90s way--we must become all things to all men so that by all possible means, we might save some (1 Corinthians 9:22).

Another revolutionary restoration was initiated at the 1993 World Missions Leadership Conference. As we studied our Bibles, we saw the offices of evangelists and elders were absolutely essential in building the church (Ephesians 4:11). In time 1 Corinthians 12 called us to appoint godly administrators in our church leaderships. However, in studying the Bible more closely, we realized that there was yet another office that helped the church mature. This is the office of teacher. In the Antioch church, the prophets and teachers led the whole church. In 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4, teachers were God given roles that the church was commanded to recognize.

Young Christians need to be taught the first principles; older ones will not be satisfied with milk and must be taught the deeper truths of the faith to keep them growing and learning and stimulated in their Christian walk. We recognized four teachers: Gordon Ferguson of the Boston Church, Doug Jacoby of the Washington, D.C. Church, Sam Laing of the Triangle Church in North Carolina, and Marty Wooten of the L.A. Church. (I personally also recognize the World Sector Leaders and elders, such as Bruce Williams, to hold the office of teacher.) These men and others who aspire to be teachers are helping us deepen our convictions and our faith so we can build the super churches and not develop a fringe of lukewarm people.

To aid us in this commitment to teaching, the Boston Church has begun Discipleship Publications International (DPI), led by Tom and Sheila Jones, to publish books written for disciples by true Christians--books that are true to the Bible and Jesus' mission.

SECTION 5: TRUE RELIGION

The true church of God cares for widows, orphans and the poor; this is practicing true religion (James 1:27). A few years ago, the World Sector Leaders and the entire movement became convicted from the Old Testament, Jesus' teachings in the gospels and the example of the early Christians in Acts and the Epistles, that God's family should overtly aid the downtrodden of the world. This awareness came through the Spirit in the preaching of Doug Arthur and the outreach of the London Church.

As a movement, we immediately repented and established HOPE worldwide. Bob and Pat Gempel became the World Sector Leaders of HOPE, and God, through them and so many of our brothers and sisters, has quickly built this fledgling effort into a truly global benevolent organization. We treat AIDS patients in Africa; leprosy patients in India and malaria patients in Central America; feed the hungry in Moscow, Kingston and Soweto; clothe the poor in Manila and New Guinea, cure drug addicts in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.; and provide rides to the doctor for the elderly in Boston. Three of the most exciting HOPE projects are taking place this year. For the first time, HOPE for Children in Atlanta will be able to adopt children to loving, Christian families from crowded orphanages in China.

Amazingly, HOPE for Kids in New York recently presented the President of the United States Bill Clinton, his wife, ; Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Vice President Al Gore with HOPE for Kids t-shirts in the Rose Garden of the White House as part of a meeting for key organizations in the President's national initiative to immunize every child in the country. Also displaying God's sovereignty among the rulers of the nations, the Indian government hosted the opening ceremony for the first half of the 800 unit Village of HOPE housing project in the largest leprosy colony of New Delhi. The Kingdom has already given \$500,000 (U.S.) so far to build 450 small apartments for these poorest of the poor.

Phil and Donna Lamb, World Sector Leaders for Central and South America, have initiated the HOPE Golf Classic in Miami, Florida, which helps support Fundacion Casa to relieve the suffering of the poor in Mexico City. Truly, our brotherhood is glorifying God our Father by "Helping Other People Everywhere."

SECTION 6: THE EVIDENCE OF GRACE -- GROWTH

Worldwide, God's family is growing in unprecedented ways, evidencing the grace of God (Acts 11:23). Recently an Inside Edition television reporter commented to us, "Many of your critics even say that the International Churches of Christ are the fastest growing Christian group in the world." Randy and Kay McKean lead the great Boston Church which has over 5,500 on Sunday mornings and is now the largest single congregation in New England's long ecclesiastical history.

The New York City Church, nobly led by Steve and Lisa Johnson, with almost 6,000 on Sundays, is the largest congregation in the largest English speaking city of the world. In such metropolitan areas as Moscow, Phnom Penh, Kingston, Singapore, Kiev, New Delhi, Toronto, Johannesburg, London, Sydney, Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Paris, we are the largest or second largest single congregation of any affiliation in the entire country. Yet, all of these churches are just a few years old. What will they be like in a decade?

New churches have been recently established in such faraway places as Katmandu, Nepal; Colombo, Sri Lanka; Beirut, Lebanon; and yes, even in Novosibirsk, Siberia. God has now blessed us with 24 churches with 1,000 or more in attendance on Sundays and 12--half--are outside the borders of the United States. (It should be noted that when a denominational church climbs to more than 500 on Sundays, it is in the upper 1% in attendance size of all the "churches" in the world.)

Though a disciple is baptized in our fellowship every 25 minutes somewhere around the world, this past year all the World Sector Leaders felt it was time to refocus God's movement on our singular mission of evangelizing this world in one generation. We penned the Evangelization Proclamation and signed it pledging our hearts, our talents, our intellects, our resources, our health, our families, our blood and our souls to fulfill our purpose.

We set before the Kingdom the outline of a six year plan to achieve the goal that by the year 2000 there would be a church of disciples in every nation of the world in which there is a city of at least 100,000. The architect of the financial plan is Doug Arthur, one of my best friends and my right hand man for the entire movement. He concluded our goal of world evangelism could be accomplished by an unprecedented worldwide collection for missions by all our churches in the First World nations. Second and Third World churches are given money from this collection for startup costs and expenses for the first few years of their existence.

After adequate time has been given for the stabilizing of that congregation, we expect even the Third World churches to become self-supporting, mission team senders, and financial contributors to their national missions. This is a unique church growth concept. Presently the International Churches of Christ are in 60 nations. By the year 2000, Lord willing, we will be in 160. As Dr. Donald McGavran (considered the father of church growth by the denominational world) told me many years ago, "You are the only church with a plan to plant churches in every nation of the world in one generation." Once more, I believe this marks us as God's true and only modern movement.

The words of John F. Kennedy in his address to the United Nations were never more appropriate than if they had been spoken to all of us in God's movement at this crucial hour:

"Never have the nations of the world had so much to lose or so much to gain. Together we shall save our planet or together we shall perish in its flames. Save it we can, and save it we must, and then shall we earn the eternal thanks of mankind and, as peacemakers, the eternal blessings of God.

It has now been two years since my first "Revolution through Restoration" article. They say there are four seasons in L.A.: fire, earthquake, drought, and flood; but, like the Randy Newman song, "I love L.A.!" My present local responsibility is lead evangelist of the L.A. Church. It is such a joy for Elena and me to work alongside our associate evangelists and women's ministry leaders, Marty and Chris Fuqua and Cory and Megan Blackwell, as well as the elders and their wives, David and Coleen Graham, Bruce and Robyn Williams, Al and Gloria Baird, and Joe and Gloria Rodriguez. In June the L.A. Church, for the first time for any church in the short 15 year history of God's modern day movement, averaged more than 7,000 on Sundays!

My family and I have lived in Los Angeles for four years. We reside in a rented three bedroom house. We own but one car--a 1993 Ford station wagon. It seems incredible, but I am now the father of a teenager, Olivia, who turned 13 in May. My sons, Sean and Eric are 11 and 9, respectively.

We have worked hard to integrate into the community and to be active in many local activities. I coached Eric's basketball team and the Lord blessed us with the championship and 140 season.

Eric averaged 18 points per game in the season and 25 points per game in the playoffs as he led the league in scoring. Sean played point guard and was selected in his league for the all star basketball team, the only fifth grader among sixth graders. Also he was just elected president of his elementary school student council for next year.

Olivia, student council president of her elementary school last year, went on to break the mile record at her junior high and tied the record for the 440 yard run. She also recently qualified for the national Miss Preteen Pageant. All three have made straight A's this year and have been active in a tennis academy where they have reached out to and baptized their coach. Obviously, they inherited these traits from their mom. Elena is working effectively with the women leaders around the world and also in L.A., particularly those with a Latin background. Turning 40 this year, I increasingly appreciate having my wife as my best human friend and coworker in the Lord.

Three years ago Steve Johnson wrote a poem to encourage me during a low moment. It embodies the spirit that every Christian should be ready to go anywhere, do anything, and give up everything for Christ:

Could I meet you in Katmandu
As we go on our way
To save this world which has been hurled
Toward that last doomsday.

I'd stand by you in Katmandu
And toast our dying breath
Pledge all it takes
For Jesus' sake
And not shrink back from death.

Or meet me near the Southern Cross
Or find us in the East
As long as we're mid hungry souls
And spreading out the feast

As long as we're mid open hearts
And visions fill us all
Then Kip please know
That for you I'll
meet anywhere at all

As of this year, if Steve and I were to meet in Katmandu, we would not be alone. There we would find our Father, God, and our brothers and sisters. Prayerfully, before this generation passes, no matter which country, no matter how isolated, how segregated, how relegated to insignificance in the eyes of the world, there we will find our God and his family, the true church of Christ. To God be the glory.