

The International Church of Christ

Also known as . . . The Boston Church of Christ, The Crossroads Movement, Multiplying Ministries, The Discipling Movement, The International Church of Christ, The London Church of Christ, The San Diego Church of Christ, etc.

Doctrines:

Believe in the Bible as the inerrant and infallible word of God.

Trinitarian, believe in the resurrection of Jesus, and the sacrificial atonement.

The Boston Church of Christ is the only true church.

Baptismal Regeneration

Baptism is necessary for salvation

Baptism in their church with a proper understanding that baptism saves.

Heavy discipleship

Unquestioned submission to authority

History:

Its distant origins go back to 1967 in Gainesville Florida, under Charles Lucas.

Lucas started a program called the Multiplying Ministries program which was very successful.

The movement we are concerned with here originated in the Crossroads Church of Christ in Florida in 1985.

Kip McKean had been trained in the Discipling methodology by Mr. Lucas. From Charleston, Ill., early in the movement. Kip later moved to Massachusetts and using the methods he learned under Lucas. The church there began to grow.

In the first year, 103 people were baptized into their church. The second year 200 were baptized; The third year 256; The fourth year 368; The fifth 457; the sixth 679, the seventh, 735; the eighth, 947; the ninth 1424; and in the tenth year, 1621 were baptized. *Total of 6790 people.* (as quoted in *What Does The Boston Movement Teach?* By Jerry Jones, Vol. 1, p. 125).

"From its modest beginnings, the church has grown into 103 congregations all over the world with total Sunday attendance of 50,000" (Time, 18 May 1992, p. 62).

In 1982 the Boston movement began planting their pillar churches.

These are churches in key cities throughout the world. The first two were established in Chicago and London.

Then in 1986, a program called "reconstruction" was undertaken. This is the process whereby ministers in established Church of Christ churches are replaced with Boston Church of Christ trained ministers (Ibid., pp. 126-127).

This caused problems among the organization, but it helped to solidify this group.

Church Structure:

Kip McKean is the director and unquestioned leader.

Under Kip are Elders.

Under the Elders are Evangelists

Then Zone Leader

Then House Church Leaders (obsolete in most congregations)

Then Assistant Bible Talk Leaders

McKean says these leaders govern by consensus but adds, 'I'm the one who gives them direction.'

Al Baird, an important Boston Church of Christ elder said, "It's not a dictatorship. It's a theocracy, with God on top," (Time, 18 May 1992, p. 62).

Baird also said, "In questions of spiritual leaders abusing their authority. It is not an option to rebel against their authority" (What Does The Boston Movement Teach? p. 7).

They are highly authoritarian

Authority and Submission (Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely)

In a discussion on submission, Al Baird, one of the uppermost leaders in the ICC said, "Let us begin our discussion of submission by talking about what it is not. (1) Submission is not agreeing. When one agrees with the decision that he is called to submit to, he does not really have to submit in any way. By definition, submission is doing something one has been asked to do that he would not do if he had his own way. (2) Submission is not just outward obedience. It includes that, but also involves obedience from the heart. It is a wholehearted giving-up of one's own desires. (3) Submission is not conditional. We submit to authority, not because the one in authority deserves it, but because the authority comes from God; therefore, we are in reality submitting to God."

Later in this same series, Baird states, "When we are under authority, we are to submit and obey our leaders even when they are not very Christ-like. However, God has standards for His leaders, and they will be accountable to God for ignoring those standards" (Authority and Submission, parts III, V and VII as quoted in What Does The Boston Movement Teach?, pp. 59-63).

Baird has said that if the leader commands one to do something, even if it is not "Christ-like," the member must submit! (Ibid., p. 104).

Many who have left the Boston Church "complain that the advice, which members are expected to obey, may include such details as where to live, whom and when to date, what courses to take in school, even how often to have sex with a spouse" (Time, 18 May 1992, p. 62).

Those who think for themselves and question the authority system are labeled.

"Bad heart" "Struggling" and "not really a disciple" are terms used when someone disagrees with a leader.

The group, then, instantly accepts these labels upon a person.

Discipleship

Step one: Invitation to a Bible talk.

Non threatening environment and topics.

Covers basics of Christianity, easy to understand discussions.

The potential converts are befriended, with invitations to further talks.

Then he/she is urged to join with a discipler to study the Bible and learn how to be more like Jesus.

From there the person is introduced into more strict and emotionally involving practices and studies.

"*Hooking*" is when someone searches for another person's interests, hobbies, and other personal information for the purpose of flattering them. This is done to attract them to the group, rather than for a sincere interest.

"*Love-bombing*" is where a visitor is inundated by flattery and friendliness in order to produce the feeling that the group will fulfill many of their needs and desires.

Once a member is assigned a discipler, he is led through a series of Bible studies.

First study is called, "**First Principles**." This is simple basics of the Bible.

Second, "**The Sins of Galatians**" study.

To get them to repent, to confess their sins, etc.

The person reads Galatians 5:19-21 and then is told to make a list of their sins. They are guided to other scriptures that have similar effects of bringing a person to feel guilty and full of sin. More sin lists follow.

Sometimes a list is kept of their sins which are sometimes brought up in various situations. . . ultimately, to keep control over the person.

This can be used to break a person down emotionally

Third, "**The Cross**" study.

The disciple listens to the discipler read the crucifixion account and is asked to say, "I am Judas -
- I am Peter."

The crucifixion is described in more of its unpleasant details and the discipler reads from the
disciple's sin list.

Often, sentences are spoken such as, "You punched him in the face." "You taunted Him." "You
whipped Him."

The disciple is supposed to be "broken" in this process, and often is...emotionally.

Baptism:

"The Boston Church of Christ teaches that when one initially receives Jesus Christ, one's
response must include faith, repentance, confession, and water baptism. It teaches that apart
from water baptism, one's sins are not forgiven" (The Issue of Water Baptism and the Boston
Church of Christ, E. Bourland, P. Owen and P. Reid, p. 1).

Not only must one be baptized, but one must also be baptized in the Boston Church of Christ. If a
person had been a member of some other church, then joins the Boston Church, they must be
rebaptized because their original baptism was done in a false church without a proper
understanding of baptism.

Therefore, salvation is gained by believing in Jesus' death on the cross and on being baptized.

Also, a person must be baptized by someone in authority in the Boston Church of Christ, i.e.,
International Church of Christ Movement.

Miscellaneous Info

Many people have been injured by the church's authoritarian and intrusive structure, so much so
that the Boston University, Marquette University, University of Southern California, Northeastern
University, and Vanderbilt University are some of the schools that have banned the Boston
Church of Christ (Miami Herald, 25 March 1992, p. 1A, 15A).

This group is definitely to be avoided. Along with its erring doctrine that baptism is necessary for
salvation, it is legalistic, manipulative, and uses guilt and aberrant doctrines to keep its members
in line. Though it is not a cult per se, it has many cult practices. It has destroyed many lives and
left many others wary of anything Christian.

Originally posted in [CARM website](#).