

Brothers' Statement to Kip McKean

Brothers from the International Churches of Christ

November 2, 2005

From the Disciples Today website:

Editor's Note: It is with continued heavy hearts and deep respect for God and his Word that we publish this letter to our family of churches known as The International Churches of Christ.

God has used Kip McKean to do many great things for him. However, his character sins have also been confronted through many years of discussions, corrections, and rebukes. The seriousness of his sin was obvious when Kip was asked to resign as the Lead Evangelist of the Los Angeles International Church of Christ in 2001 and asked to resign his role as the World Missions Evangelist for the International Churches of Christ in 2002. Though his current ministry in Portland, Oregon has grown, the character sins have not changed and Kip has publicly announced his intentions to continue dividing disciples and churches around the world.

In October 2005, 65 brothers from around the world came in a unified appeal for Kip to publicly repent in the spirit of Matthew 18. He did not respond to that request so the brothers took the matter to the church by publishing the [Brothers' Letter to Kip McKean](#). Since that time he has not responded except to continue in his efforts to divide. Therefore, 84 brothers sent him the following statement and are publishing it here for the church to know and to continue to pray for the repentance that would be so refreshing.

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November 2, 2005

Our dear brother Kip,

We remain grateful for all the ways God has used you to advance his church around the world and to help us personally. That gratitude and love makes us all the more saddened by your continued lack of repentance and further dismayed by the response from the Portland Church Leadership to our appeal for you to repent. We will not continue a public discussion of these very clear issues. We still appeal to you to repent and we appeal to our united group of brothers & sisters from the fellowship known as the International Churches of Christ around the world to carefully consider these things.

[1. The Brothers' Letter was addressed to Kip. \(Click to read.\)](#) Our intent is clearly stated in the preface to the Brothers' Letter and in the letter itself: to call you to repentance and to protect the flock. In the spirit of Matthew 18, a large number of us who have confronted

you throughout the past ten years brought other concerned brothers with us to again appeal to you to repent of sins that harm the body of Christ. We did not address the Portland leaders because we were not confronting them with sin. We hoped they would help you with your repentance. Unfortunately, you chose not to personally and meaningfully respond. Therefore, following Matthew 18:15-17, we took the matter to the church by publicly distributing our call to repent in hopes you would see the seriousness of your sin. You also did not directly respond to the public rebuke.

We understand that the Portland Church is excited at many of the good things they are seeing for the first time in their congregation. The Portland leadership defended you in their [published response](#), but it is sorely disappointing that they have chosen to not take seriously the 65 respected brothers from around the world. Several of us have talked with the Portland leaders individually and are willing to talk with them about their concerns. Our united observations are neither the imaginings of young Christians or of people new to your life, nor are they only recent or isolated experiences. They are an overwhelming testimony from those who have known you intimately for the past 10 to 30 years. In love, united as your brothers, we stand by these statements from the [Brothers' Letter to Kip McKean](#) that call for your repentance of these specific alienating sins:

- "Pride, Arrogance and Anger" – You have recently said, "I can fix any church." And "You don't understand. I am the star." This kind of pride fits with your not responding to the 65 brothers from around the world. In light of the gravity of the situation, we are very disappointed that you chose not to respond. While we acknowledge that each of us is nothing but a servant of Christ, our combined testimony is exactly the church discipline the Scriptures prescribe (Matthew 18:15-17).

- "Disrespect, Gossip, Slander and Condemnation Towards Churches and Disciples" – These same concerns are apparent in the Portland response and continue in the Portland bulletin articles as well as in private conversations. The facts published about church memberships were not accurate even though they have been publicly posted for months on www.DisciplesToday.net and on www.ICOCInfo.org Directory (see the October 14 comments by Kelcy Hahn on www.ICOCInfo.org).

Our churches began their decline in 1994, not in 2002. (see [Rate of Membership Growth/Decline, 1994-2004](#)). It is hard to overstate this point: you continue to rewrite the history of the movement in a simplistic, misleading and self-advancing way. Since 2003, you have refused to take a significant part of the blame for the parts of our church-building that burned up as hay and straw in the firestorm that went through our movement in the last few years (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). Certainly you are not the only one responsible. Numerous brothers have accepted their responsibility and have been laying down their lives to rebuild churches with maturity and materials that will last. But it cannot be said straightforwardly enough that many, if not most, of the current weaknesses in the very churches you condemn can be traced to the domino effect of your own short-term, short-sighted and shortcut leadership dynamic of the 1990's while you were leading the Los Angeles International Church of Christ and were the Missions Evangelist for the ICOC. Because of your unrepented sins, you were asked to resign from both of those roles.

- "Ungodly Ethics" and "Hatred, Discord, Jealousy, Selfish Ambition, Dissensions, Factions and Envy" (Galatians 5:19– 21)

In the leadership response, you attempt to justify divisive means by appealing to the fact that Jesus' teachings often caused division. Preaching the truth of the gospel indeed causes divisions between those who choose to be disciples of Christ and those who reject Christ. As you can see from our beliefs listed below, we are not talking about this kind of division. Disciples who use divisive tactics cause ungodly division. Here is a simple

example: If someone began calling the Portland church members one at a time, disrespecting their leadership and recruiting their loyalty behind your back because "Kip has been so controversial; where there's smoke, there's fire," how would you respond? You simply would not tolerate this kind of behavior, and yet it is the very thing you do, because to you, the ends justifies the means. Ungodly divisions are addressed in the Bible: **For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. (Romans 16:18)**

You have consistently pointed to baptisms as "proof," that your point of view is right. This is a limited, dangerous view. By that standard you would have to agree that the Mormon Church must be right, for they remain the fastest growing group of believers in the world and they baptize people. At the same time, we acknowledge that one of the signs of a healthy church is baptisms and we are glad for the Portland congregation that baptisms are happening there. In fact, around the world, many churches are now baptizing again (not just Portland), and many, many more will follow, but neither baptisms nor growth justify arrogance, disrespect, division, irrational thinking, alliances with disfellowshipped leaders, or false teaching. Even Paul noted that people motivated by envy, rivalry and selfish ambition could preach the gospel. (Philippians 1:15-18)

In the following section quoted from the [Brothers' Letter](#) to you, we urged you not to have worldly sorrow.

"We are praying for you not to give in to Satan's temptation to respond to this rebuke with worldly sorrow. By our experience with you in the past many years, if you are unrepentant, you will do the following:

- 1) Be indignant that we would correct you because of all you have done for God and for us.
- 2) Play the martyr. Please do not demean the cross of Jesus by portraying yourself as being crucified. You are being rebuked as God directs us to. You charged many of us with being evangelists who were willing to preach the Word without favoritism. We have all been rebuked and challenged to repent. We must expect the same mature repentance from you
- 3) Blame this rebuke on us. Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?
Galatians 4:16
- 4) Plan a strategic, political response to our rebuke.
- 5) Use this rebuke to further divide churches and cause divisions, factions and dissensions that result in more followers for you.
- 6) Ignore our rebuke and call for us to repent , thus throwing the issues back on us.
- 7) Completely ignore our call to repentance."

This is perhaps the most concerning thing of all: You have demonstrated virtually each of these reactions by not responding directly to our appeal and in the Portland Leadership Response. Perhaps the answer to your resistance to repentance lies in the Portland Leadership's article:

"By November 2002 at the Los Angeles Unity Meeting, Kip officially resigned as the World Missions Evangelist, not because he felt he was disqualified for his role , but in an effort to preserve unity between the leaders and the churches."

This statement speaks volumes as another history rewrite placing the responsibility for your resignation back on the "disunity" between other leaders and other churches. *In fact, your resignation was virtually demanded by leaders within and without your most intimate circles.* The Portland response paints your resignation in noble colors, something

completely inconsistent with what actually took place. This along with your subsequent behavior demonstrates worldly sorrow not godly sorrow for God's discipline.

2. Different Directions:

We recognize before God and his people the new division that you have caused in the body of Christ. When you were called and asked if we could deliver the Brothers' Letter to you in person, you said that it was not necessary because we were already going in two different directions. We believe that you began your new movement with *The Portland Story* article calling out "the remnant" to follow you. Apparently the Portland Leadership agrees with this. May we all be abundantly clear about the unfortunate circumstances of such a division.

This division is not, as you have stated, a Paul / Barnabas issue. Rather, you have clearly created this division by:

- 1) Comparing ministries in terms of salvation and who has the favor of God. This is in the tradition of many sects within the mainline Churches of Christ and other church histories who have divided numerous times following personalities who use doctrinal issues as a cover to draw men after themselves.
- 2) Calling people to leave churches of faithful disciples, slandering leaders, hurting the weak instead of helping those churches to become strong.
- 3) Not practicing what you preach. You want to lead and teach people to be disciples around the world, but you are not willing to repent or to be held accountable to a group of brothers who know you best.
- 4) Unwholesomely commending yourself and your church as the center of leadership when indeed you need a Biblical commendation from the brothers. We cannot approve of someone who is not humble enough to repent or respond to the words of many witnesses. In tears as brothers who love you and have confronted you, we warn all whom you seek to draw after yourself of your lack of repentance and character sins.

Nowhere do we see Paul and Barnabas espousing such attitudes or actions.

In your desire to go a different direction to seek and save the lost, we encourage you to do so by truly seeking and saving the lost instead of trying to divide disciples and churches whom you say you regard as brothers in Christ. Can you not build your churches simply through local evangelism as you are challenging other churches to do?

If you are not willing to seek and save the lost without dividing other churches, then we must conclude that your interest is not primarily in seeking and saving the lost, but in building a kingdom for yourself. God has clearly disciplined you and opposed you for your pride before and you have not listened. God is the ultimate judge. We fear your new efforts are self-centered and in the long run, will be clearly opposed by God again. ["God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." \(1 Peter 5:5\).](#)

• Denying God's Discipline: The Portland Leadership response claims that when the centralized leadership dissolved, "the ICOC as we once knew it ceased to exist." The response shows no acknowledgment of the hand of God and our learning from him. The issue is reduced to a discussion of structure and organization. This is the real heart behind what went wrong with our churches in the 1990s. We are glad that the church organization that valued structure over spirituality and maturity has ceased to exist. But the church is God's. He is still leading us. He has disciplined us. We are still learning

from his discipline. We are seeking his will in how we should work together in the future. This is why there was such unity in forming the [Brotherhood Proposal Group](#). We are glad that God is still working through us as a family of churches called the International Churches of Christ.

Our Convictions: As we go in different directions, we want to again affirm our beliefs:

- The one true God has revealed himself to us as the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit.
- Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, our Lord and Savior.
- The Bible is the Word of God and is the authority for our life.
- Jesus called all men and women to become his disciples, be baptized into his body and be taught to obey him.
- The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus is of first importance and the foundation of our faith.
- Every disciple is to be totally committed to God, His Kingdom and to Jesus as Lord and Savior.
- Every disciple is called to participate in the Great Commission of Jesus.
- Every disciple is called to obey the one another passages of Scripture.
- Every disciple is called to maintain the Spirit of unity in the bond of peace.
- Every disciple is called to follow the Greatest Commandment: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and your neighbor as yourself.
- Every disciple is committed to become more like Christ in his or her character.
- We believe in churches working together, respecting, helping and needing each other to build up the body of Christ.
- We also believe that God's intent is for disciples to marry disciples and for married disciples to remain married to each other till death.

We commit to do everything in our power that is godly to help unify our churches, to mature them and to reach the world with the gospel.

Reaping and Sowing

It is true that **"A good tree bears good fruit and a bad tree bears bad fruit... By their fruit you will recognize them."** (Matthew 7:17-20) You have refused to listen to brothers throughout the world whom God has used to bear fruit that lasts. They have not only born fruit in baptisms, they have built churches without pulling people from other churches. They also have grown in the fruits of the Spirit—the fruits of long-lasting Maturity. You will indeed reap what you sow. We have repented of sowing the seeds of competition, condemnation and bitterness that we reaped. We call on you to do the same so that you will not reap the same harvest again.

We are deeply concerned for those lives you will affect in the future. Since you have not demonstrated repentance and are resuming your harmful methods, our 30 years of experience with you shows that if you continue to build as you did before in your new

churches:

-- Two thirds who will fall away, the weak will be left behind, some of your churches will grow rapidly, yet will not mature in Christ, will not resolve conflict among leaders and then will suffer another firestorm in the future at the hand of God's discipline.

-- This zeal without knowledge and wisdom will be constantly frustrated in trying to evangelize the world.

Preach the Gospel

We are happy for every person who becomes a Christian. We also recognize:

It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Philipians 1:15-18

Of course, you are free to go the direction you have chosen. For years you have focused the church on the mission of Christ, but you have failed to respond to your brothers who have confronted you with the parts of your character that do not reflect Christ. We are committing ourselves to build the Lord's Church and our relationships on the mission and the character of Christ.

From our deep concern for your soul and to protect the flock, we must continue to oppose you as long as you try to divide disciples from one another. Out of reverence for God and love for you and all of his people, we commit to obeying these Scriptures which tell us to have no further fellowship with you until you repent:

I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. Romans 16:17-18

But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. Titus 3:10-11

We are very saddened by this time. Yet we know that the Bible has told us not to show favoritism. These Scriptures and standards are for everyone. We pray that we will all reexamine our hearts and lives and recommit to the Lord as he committed himself to us. Jesus is the Lord we are following and the Savior who is being formed in each of us.

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

**Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.**

And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself
 and became obedient to death—
 even death on a cross!
 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
 and gave him the name that is above every name,
 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
 in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
 to the glory of God the Father.
 Philippians 2:1-11

With deep love and concern,
 Your brothers in Christ,

Javier Amaya	Los Angeles	USA
Ed Bahula	Toronto	Canada
Al Baird	Los Angeles	USA
Martin Bentley	Orlando	USA & South America
Tim Bernitt	Wichita	USA
Tom Brown	Los Angeles	USA
Ron Brumley	Seattle	USA
John Brush	South Florida	USA
Mark Buchholz	Boston	USA
Robert Carillo	San Diego	USA
John Causey	Los Angeles	USA
Jeff Chacon	San Diego	USA
Steve Chin	Taipei	Taiwan
Malcolm Cox	London	England
Larry Craig	New York City	USA
Henry Cramer	Los Angeles	USA
Dave Eastman	Orlando	USA
Brian Felushko	Vancouver	Canada
Thierry Fender	Geneva	Switzerland
Gordon Ferguson	Phoenix Elders & Evangelists	USA
Mike Fontenot	Hampton Roads	USA & Commonwealth
Andy Fleming	Los Angeles	USA & Eurasia and Middle East
Herve Fleurant	Denver	USA
Blaise Feumba	Abidjan	Ivory Coast & West Africa
Jack Frederick	Boston	USA
Marty Fuqua	Los Angeles	USA
Anthony Galang	Los Angeles	USA
Scott Green	Seattle Leadership	USA & China
A.J. Hoff	Boston	USA
Kevin Holland	Los Angeles	USA
Maurice Hooks	Tulsa	USA
Bill Hooper	Dallas	USA
Douglas Jacoby	Atlanta	USA
Jake Jensen	Los Angeles	USA
Tom Jones	Nashville	USA
Jay Kelly	Seattle	USA
Sam Laing	Athens	USA
Philip Lam	Hong Kong	China
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Jim Lenahan	Boston	USA
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John Lusk	St. Louis	USA
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Kevin Mains	Los Angeles	USA
John Mannel	Los Angeles	USA
Gregg Marutzky	Denver	USA
John McGuirk	Boston	USA
Kevin Miller	Boston	USA
Chip Mitchell	Boston	USA
Hector Morales	Boston	USA
Greg Nevil	Boston	USA
Bob Neyland	Nashville Elders	USA
Reese Neyland	Los Angeles	USA
Ken Ostrowski	Boston	USA
Daren Overstreet	Seattle	USA
John Porter	Miami	USA
Sam Powell	New York City	USA
Christian Ray	S. Florida	USA
Justin Renton	Cape Town	S. Africa
Dan Rice	St. Louis	USA
Kevin Robbins	Toronto	Canada
Mike Rock	Los Angeles	USA
Mirko Russo	Berlin	Germany
Steve Saindon	Minneapolis	USA
Charlie Sawyer	Kansas City	USA
Wyndham Shaw	Boston	USA & Europe
Tony Singh	Chicago	USA & Canada
Rob Skinner	Ashland, Oregon	USA
Foster Stanback	Los Angeles	USA
Steve Staten	Chicago	USA
Jerry Sugarman	Los Angeles	USA
Peti Szabad	Budapest	Hungary
Greg Tacher	Seattle	USA
Mike Taliaferro	San Antonio	USA & Africa
Marty Udall	Toronto	Canada
Mike VanAuken	Boston	USA
Mike Vassallo	Melbourne	Australia
Danie Vos	Johannesburg	South Africa
Clarence Webster	Boston	USA
Bruce Williams	Los Angeles	USA
Tomm Wilson	Chicago	USA
Shawn Wooten	Kiev	Ukraine
Keith Wright	Northwest Arkansas	USA