

11/11/2001 By Al Baird & Bob Gempel
Response to McKeans' Sabbatical Announcement

We are both saddened and encouraged by the decision for Kip and Elena to take a sabbatical. Certainly we are saddened by their shortcomings in the vital areas of marriage and family, but we are also saddened by our own failure to have given them all the help they needed in these areas. At the same time, however, we are encouraged by their eagerness to learn and to make needed changes. From the time we asked them to take this sabbatical, they have been eager to do whatever is necessary to become all that God wants them to be as mates, parents and disciples of Jesus.

The term "sabbatical" has been borrowed from the academic community. It simply means a leave of absence granted an individual for the purpose of rest, study or some other pursuit related to, but independent of, that person's usual and customary responsibilities. It is granted with the expectation that the individual will at some later date resume the normal responsibilities that go with his role. For example, when a college president takes a sabbatical, he is no longer involved in the day-to-day activities of the college; however, he still remains the college president. Accordingly, during this sabbatical Kip and Elena will step aside from their day-to-day ministry responsibilities in order to devote themselves to working on their marriage and family dynamic. Of course, with any major decisions regarding the fellowship of churches the World Sector Leaders will consult them.

We are deeply grateful for the powerful ways in which God has used Kip and Elena to build the church into what it is today and for the tremendous sacrifices they have made in the process. So many of us would not be Christians were it not for them and their impact in our lives. What they need most from us during this difficult time are our prayers and encouragement. We are confident that by God's grace their best years in the Kingdom are still ahead of them. Pray for all of us that we will become all that God wants us to be.

Al Baird and Bob Gempel
(for the World Sector Leaders)
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