

Evangelization Proclamation

By Kip McKean

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On this fourth day of February, in the year of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred and ninety-four, we the World Sector Leaders issue this proclamation.

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We place before each true disciple the unanswered and most ancient of Christian challenges: the completion of the Great Commission. We affirm and assert that Jesus' last command to the eleven faithful disciples was to evangelize the world in their generation. Obeyed by the apostles, this guiding command extends to each succeeding generation, yet has not been accomplished again for almost two millennia. As God's modern-day movement, the time is now for each true disciple to go far beyond any feat of faith or deeds of daring witnessed to this hour. In this proclamation we issue such a challenge.

"Miracle" is the defining word of the decade and a half since our attack against the darkness was launched. In Boston scarcely more than fourteen years ago, 30 would-be disciples gathered in the living room of Bob and Pat Gempel. They came together bonded by the blood of Jesus, the Spirit of our God, the Bible as the only inspired and inerrant Scriptures and a conviction that only the totally committed could be members of the Lexington Church of Christ (later renamed Boston). In the next few months the Bible doctrine from Acts 11:26 of Saved = Christian = Disciple was crystallized. The Spirit then gave us a deep conviction that only these baptized disciples comprise God's kingdom on earth. This was and still is the true church of Jesus.

Thirteen years ago prompted by the Holy Spirit, the elders and evangelists of the Boston Church of Christ made the radical decision that young men and women who desired to be leaders in the church should be trained in a local congregation, not in a seminary. We also believed that because of doctrinal and lifestyle differences we could not in good conscience send our young, newly trained leaders into existing mainline churches.

Twelve years ago we embarked on an historic revolutionary path to send mission teams of disciples from Boston into the world's largest and most influential cities. We called the churches planted in these cities "pillar churches" because they would become the principal supports for an international brotherhood and in turn would evangelize the capital cities of the nations in their regions of influence. The capital city churches would then evangelize all the cities and villages of their nations. With this dream and our prayers, God moved with the twin church plantings of Chicago and London.

Eleven years ago God's hand touched New York City. Though this city of darkness had a population of 18 million in the metropolitan area, only 18 disciples were sent from Boston. We believed only one church of disciples, no matter how small, would be sufficient for God to use them to saturate the city with his Word if they remained faithful to the command to make disciples who made disciples who made disciples. This radical doctrine was confirmed in Scripture by example: Jerusalem, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and the great metropolis of Rome had only one church.

Ten years ago a remnant of disciples from various Churches of Christ, Christian Churches and other denominational movements left everything and moved to Boston or our plantings. We were widely labeled the "Boston Movement."

Nine years ago Toronto became our second foreign planting. At that time the Boston church first exceeded 1,000 in attendance. Now 21 churches have over 1,000 on Sundays. Eight of these churches are on foreign soil. God's grace was further evidenced as London and Toronto were the first to break this barrier.

Eight years ago a miracle happened in Johannesburg, where in the church blacks and whites did not merely coexist, but for the first time hugged one another in the midst of apartheid and under the threat of extremists. Paris and Stockholm were also miracle churches which proved language an inconsequential barrier to the preaching of the cross.

Seven years ago came the first reconstructions. At the request of leaders in mainline churches, the elders and evangelists of the Boston church sent trained preachers into these congregations to call out more of the remnant. Revolutionary, Nehemiah-like sermons were delivered to these existing mainline churches, and those individuals who responded by renewing their initial disciple's commitment or were baptized as disciples formed new congregations that were now no different from the other Boston Movement churches. Each was composed solely of baptized disciples. Kingston and Sydney were the first of some twenty reconstructed churches. Also at this time was the miracle of Bombay where God began to annihilate the demons of poverty, disease and apathy. Now, seven churches minister to the almost one billion people of India. HOPE Worldwide was formed to become the benevolent arm of our brotherhood.

Six years ago came the plantings of Mexico City, Hong Kong, and Cairo. After many months of study, counsel, and a final all night of prayer, the world sector leaders were selected. The nations of the world were divided into sectors, and each world sector leader couple was given a charge to evangelize their sector in this generation.

Five years ago Manila, Tokyo, and Los Angeles began. Literally thousands, as in the Book of Acts, were baptized in these three cities giving us the vision of super-churches in each of the metropolitan cities of the world. The Los Angeles Church now has an attendance of 6,000 on Sundays.

Four years ago an attack was launched on Satan's throne in Bangkok where one in six women is engaged in prostitution, and AIDS is clearly becoming the Black Death of the Nineties.

Three short years ago God melted the Iron Curtain. The Moscow Church of Christ was planted and already has over 2,000 in attendance, and five daughter churches in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Two years ago came the first fifth-generation church: Boston planted London, London planted Sydney, Sydney planted Auckland and Auckland planted God's church in the Cook Islands.

Less than one year ago at the World Missions Leadership Conference, all the evangelists, women's ministry leaders, and elders in all of our churches gathered in the Los Angeles Sports Arena along with 10,000 other disciples as we formally adopted the name "International Churches of Christ." God in his grace and mercy has blessed his modern day movement of true

Christians as our churches now number 146 with an attendance of over 75,000! True churches are now established in 53 of the 216 nations of the world

Today compelled by the Spirit and five billion lost souls, we lay before the brotherhood a simple but comprehensive strategy for the completion of world evangelism. Presently, there exist 160 countries with a city of at least 100,000 people. Disciples are in only 49. Therefore in the presence of God and Christ Jesus who will judge the living and the dead and in view of his appearing and his kingdom we give you this charge: Give to God your dreams, energies, health, finances, intellects, families, and yes, even your life, to plant churches in the remaining 111 nations by the year 2000. Let us reach the remaining small, unevangelized nations early in the next millennium.

To make possible the evangelization of all nations, an historic financial plan has been instituted. No longer will it be the sole responsibility of American churches to finance missions, but all first-world churches will join together to take up a yearly missions collection that will be used to finance new and existing third-world churches. This allows the kingdom to make more rapid progress with the difficult third-world plantings. The second-world churches will likewise give a missions contribution which will allow them to become self-supporting and evangelize their respective nations. Since the first-world finances will only manage to initiate third-world plantings, the third-world churches must also sacrifice in unprecedented ways to contribute toward their own mission works even to the point of some of these churches being led by unpaid disciples. For these dreams to become reality, nationals must ready themselves now to return to their homelands. Of ultimate necessity for all of us is fervent prayer unseen in our day. Only zealous prayer will allow God to empower, embolden, and employ each of us to fulfill our individual destiny, and thus this global proclamation.

Though unprecedented, our past efforts are but a flickering flame in a universe of demonic darkness. If we are to change the course of human events, we must remember that like all flesh our time on earth is but a mist. The tombs of Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius, Lincoln, Lenin and Gandhi are but dust and darkness. Like the faithful eleven our overriding inspiration lies in the empty, light-filled tomb of Jesus. This is our one and only sure hope--eternal life. To complete the commission, all of the eleven but John died a martyr's death--this was and still is the ultimate price for world evangelism. Therefore, let us go forth together with a resolve that even the gates of hell will not prevail. Only heaven awaits.

And to God be the Glory!