

Response to "From Babylon to Zion: Revolution through Restoration III".

Leaders Salt Lake Christian Church

July 17, 2003

Steve & Julia Roland --

After reading Kip McKean's essay "From Babylon to Zion: Revolution through Restoration III" (available from www.portland.ucd.net), we wish to share our thoughts with you. While we encourage each of you to feel free to form your own conclusions, we wanted to formally state our conclusions.

Many of you may not know that Kip McKean served as the leader or "Missions Evangelist" of the International Churches of Christ, up until the Fall of 2001. At that time, the men closest to him spiritually, along with many others, felt that it was essential that he step down from this role. Since then, he and his wife have decided to lead the Portland Church of Christ. Although he no longer has a role that directly oversees the church here, we felt that his prior leadership role with the International Churches of Christ, along with his persuasive sounding arguments, might lead some to question whether the content of his essay would have an influence on the church here.

After reading his letter, we would like to firmly state that we do not plan on implementing his ideas here in Salt Lake City. We are concerned that he has even written a letter, because he certainly is not seen as an authority in our eyes, yet he tries to exert authority over "all the congregations". In the letter, we feel that he has set himself up as a prophet (from his Psalm, pages 5-6, in the letter) and as God's anointed. We believe that this contradicts scripture (Hebrews 1:1-2, 1 Corinthians 13:8-12, Romans 15:14, etc.) If he is a prophet, then it is implied that we must obey his every word without question.

We are concerned with how self-focused the letter is and how out of touch he seems with the individual needs in churches around the world that he has formerly overseen. Most of the points seem designed to convince us that he should be leading again. He indirectly or directly compares himself to Elijah, Moses, Nehemiah, and the apostle Paul. He says that he does not believe in the office of an apostle today, but that basically the role should still exist for the purpose of evangelizing the world, with the title of "Missions Evangelist". To our knowledge, Kip has been the only one in our group of churches to have this title so far. Kip talks about the need for a hierarchy of authority with churches being over churches. We will not accept this here in Salt Lake because we do not believe it is right. We believe we can mutually encourage one another as church leaders and that church governance needs to come from within each congregation.

We were alarmed when he called each individual member of the ICOC to humbly beg forgiveness from his or her leaders (page 29). We emphatically do not expect this from the members of the Salt Lake Christian Church.

There are many interpretations of scripture given that are out of context or completely misused. Since Kip has been removed from leadership of the International Churches of Christ, it seems that he should have been going back to all of the congregations that have been under his responsibility and find out all the ways he has personally hurt each of them. We feel very concerned for the arrogance and pride that we saw throughout the letter on

issues of discipling methods and church authority. We believe that Kip has gone beyond what is written in his interpretations of the scripture, and that it is to be accepted without question. "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not take pride in one man over against another. (1 Corinthians 4:6b)

The letter is very focused on numerical growth. However, we are seeing from the Bible that the purpose of the church is to take care of and mature the members, and not just to grow numerically. God will make it grow as we love one another (John 13:34-35, 1 Corinthians 3:7).

We, along with our core group of leaders, do not plan to implement Kip's proposals in this church. However, we do plan to continue to stay connected to churches around the world and to encourage, mature and take care of our church here in Salt Lake. We look forward to watching God make it grow as we all make it to heaven. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us personally at the email addresses listed below.

Love in Christ,
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