

The Boston Movement --- From Man or God?

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Introduction: The term religious cult is one that generates much emotion but often is not defined. One said it is the church down the street.

- A. Even if we disagree with the term, I want to examine the teachings and practices of a religious movement that began in churches of Christ.
 - 1. The group was once known as the Crossroads Movement, later as the Boston Movement and now as the International Churches of Christ.
 - 2. The movement has evolved and divided in the last 10 years. I want to present what they were 15 years ago for purposes of showing how powerful and destructive a human religious movement can be.
- B. Our focus of this study will be the scriptures.
 - 1. However in the course of the study we will examine several tragic examples of the fruits of human control and authority in the place of God.
 - 2. There are groups in this town that use similar approaches.

I. What are the fundamental differences between this group and the Bible?

- A. The issue is one of control. Is Jesus our Lord or is a group of humans? (**Col 2:18-23**)
 - 1. Appearances can be deceptive. Someone may seem strong, but in truth are in slavery to men.
 - 2. Please never stop thinking and let your emotions cause you to judge what is right and wrong.
- B. The Boston Movement was directed by one man -- Kip McKean.
 - 1. Kip McKean was baptized into the Crossroads Movement in Gainesville, Florida and trained by Chuck Lucas.
 - 2. What was informal control under Crossroads became official policy under the Boston Movement. They developed a pyramid structure leading up to Kip McKean at the very top.
 - 3. What is wrong with this structure? (**Matt 16:18; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Acts 14:23**)
 - 4. This desire for control permeates this movement.
 - 5. This movement as in all human movements is constantly migrating in their doctrine. They had great similarities to churches of Christ.
- C. The Boston Movement requires complete “transparency” of their members.
 - 1. Members must tell all things about their selves to members over them. This includes past, present thoughts, dreams, and all decisions.
 - 2. During their uniform conversion classes, the prospect goes through the light and darkness study.
 - 3. The prospect hears emotional confessions on the part of the two members in the class with them. Then it is their turn. This study will last for hours.
 - 4. They try to justify this practice from **James 5:16**.
 - 5. This view does not harmonize with **Matt 18:15-17** and **1 Peter 4:15**.
 - 6. Here you begin to see a pattern in this movement that will show up time and again: Man is put in the place of God!
 - 7. When you tell all you give others great power. It will be used later.

- D. The Boston Movement requires everyone to submit to others beyond Bible limits.
 - 1. In the first study you are taught that in order to be a disciple you must have a “discipler.”
 - 2. We are to be disciples, but of who? (**Matt 28:19-20**)
 - 3. These “disciplers” are given complete control of the disciple. **Eph 5:21** is used as proof. Note the reciprocal pronoun one another (**Eph 5:19**)
 - 4. Only elders are given limited authority in the scriptures. (**Heb 13:17; Acts 20:28-30**)
 - 5. It is sad to see a novice given complete authority over another.
- E. The Boston Movement uses deceptive tactics to gain and keep converts.
 - 1. Love bombing is used at social events to interest people. Members must be friendly and act happy, even when they are unhappy!
 - 2. Personal information is passed up the chain of command and is used in conversations and sermons without the knowledge of the prospect.
 - 3. People are constantly praising you in unnatural ways and conversely praise can be uniformly withdrawn when the leadership gives the word.
 - 4. This is fake love. (**1 Thess 2:3-4; Gal 4:16-18; Jude 16**) — Flattery
 - 5. Those who leave this movement feel deeply violated. They are often very angry.
 - 6. They will lie and mislead you as to their beliefs. They have an outer doctrine and an inner doctrine.
- F. The Boston Movement practices known elements of mind control.

II. What are the Fruits of this movement?

- A. They are a spiritual meat-grinder.
 - 1. Most people leave within two years.
 - 2. Sadly, most of these will not seek God again.
- B. They seek to divide family and friends in sinful ways.
 - 1. There is a place where we put God first over parents. (**Matt 10:37-38**)
 - 2. Still I am not to cast them off.
 - 3. When a parent or a friend ceases to be a prospect they are forgotten.
 - 4. When one first comes into the movement they must have one from the movement go home with them on holidays.
 - 5. One mother in Lincoln paid a high price. Their daughter never enrolled in school. The mother moved from New York to Lincoln, Nebraska to help.
 - 6. Here is where they use the sin list.
- C. They destroy careers, families and lives.
 - 1. Their schedule is overwhelming. Sleep is deprived.
 - 2. Jobs are lost and sometimes lives are.
- D. They create hurt that requires much help to heal
 - 1. Note “The Discipling Dilemma.”
 - 2. Ex. My experience with one mother whose son finally came out.

III. How to confront groups like this

- A. Know their doctrine.
- B. Establish the completeness of the scriptures.
- C. Show the fallacies of discipleship as they teach it. (**1 Cor 7:25-28**)