

The ICC and the ICOC

A Concise Distinction

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I was recently asked by two non-US evangelists in the International Churches of Christ about my answer to the question: "What are the main differences between the ICC and the ICOC?" No two people would answer this question the exact same way because we each have personal experiences. This paper was shaped by my: 1) 35 years as a Christian, 26 years of fulltime ministry, which includes the roles of elder, evangelists and teacher, 2) graduate education in New Testament, and in conflict management, and 3) my vocation as an organizational health and risk management consultant.

The ICOC has not published new positions concerning Kip McKean and his breakoff that led to the ICC since late 2005, when about eighty ministers affirmed a disciplinary position against Kip. Since that time the leading indicators of where the ICOC stands with the ICC has come from the writings of respected individuals such as Mike Taliaferro and Justin Renton. Like those papers, I am not inclined to write a paper that is merely us-versus-them, but to provide clarification.

One of the main ICC evangelists, Luis J. Martinez, aka "LuJack" posted the areas "the ICOC and the ICC agree on":

1) that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; 2) that Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day; 3) that Jesus Christ called us to be his disciples; 4) that Jesus Christ called us to be born again, born of water and the Spirit; 5) that Jesus Christ called us to "go and make disciples of ALL nations, baptizing them--for the forgiveness of sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit--in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"; 6) that we must teach ALL disciples to OBEY EVERYTHING Jesus commanded us; 7) that the Bible contains the very Words of God; 8) that the church is the body of Christ and the kingdom of God; 9) that the acts of the sinful nature are obvious; 10) that we must confess our sins to each other and pray for each so that we may be healed; 11) that we must seek FIRST God's kingdom and his righteousness, and he will provide us everything we need for life and godliness; 12) that we must strive to evangelize the whole wide world while God gives us life to do so;

LuJack's list of agreements are much appreciated. As readers will probably concur, the distinctions are not about core orthodox theology at the time of conversion to Christ, they fall under the category of philosophy and paradigms. These differences have a significant influence on the health of an individual and congregation, even after a short time.

I considered Kip McKean's paper on the five differences between the ICC and the ICOC. I don't think his explanations with the distinctions will satisfy a informed member of the ICOC. The following five statements more accurately contrast the two movements, in my mind, but not necessarily in any particular order.

The "One Generation" Timetable

- Members of the ICOC are bound by the great commission, and further the reach of the gospel at the pace he enables us.
- The ICC maintains that Jesus expects a single movement of God's people to reach the entire planet in "one generation."

The Leadership Structure of Global Fellowships

- The leadership structure of the global ICOC fellowship is based on representation of geography and role, where individuals are selected by spirituality, gifts and experience. There is intra and interdependence between roles, rather than a hierarchical pyramid.
- The ICC has been governed by one man from wherever Kip McKean is located, and he is over other territories through lead evangelists, who are over others, and so forth, based on the so-called Jethro Principle.

The “Anointed” Theology

- The ICOC recognizes the biblical concept of “anointed” in various contexts. There is only one person recognized in the New Testament who is anointed to be unquestioned above all others—the Anointed One, the Christ.
- The ICC model embraces the notion of an anointed person over others, and there are warnings of speaking *or* going against the anointed leader. Kip is the primary anointed leader over God’s kingdom, in this paradigm, whereby ICC evangelists are also anointed.

The Essence of Church Life

- The ICOC holds that the idealized church is a body, a family, a just brotherhood and exists within the eternal kingdom with a heavenly king. Collectively, a brotherhood of churches is idealized when each congregation cooperates and collaborates as custodians of shared aspirations and resources.
- The ICC aka “The SoldOut Movement” is so highly absorbed with Kip McKean and his message of pulling in “the remnant” and reaching “the world in one generation” that its top-down features resemble the military more than a family of believers.

The Practice of Discipling

- The ICOC embraces the intentional strengthening of members, through a commitment between individuals. The goal is spiritual maturity and Christ-likeness. Discipling is carried out according to the suitability of relational dynamics, maturity, overall experience and wisdom of individuals—peer to peer, stronger or more experienced strengthening the weaker or novice, through triads, or small groups. Depending on availability, members have options of their discipling. The kind of each discipling experience, whether organic or structured means, varies by culture and situation.
- The ICC tends to practice discipling with much more assigned, structured with an over/under understanding.

An underlying theme of “control” pervades most or all of the above differences, which I believe has serious ramifications over time. Kip and the leaders who zealously promote his program will be held liable, especially because lessons from the past demonstrate various forms of negative fallout from these philosophies and the leadership paradigm. And they should be directly questioned on this issues.

The average ICC member who struggles to comes to grips with these topics, and have questions, will be treated with respect and compassion. For ICC leaders who wish to engage with the ICOC for reconciliation, you will be received with the same respect, providing they are willing to openly renounce the control-oriented dogmas listed above.

A more comprehensive contrast that includes historical backdrop, bible study, and further commentary read *The ICC and ICOC—An In-Depth Distinction*.