

The Church Planting Project

PART ONE OF FIVE

A powerful new method for introducing apostasy into our church has received the full approval and backing of the North American Division

Weep, my friend, weep. The administrative headquarters of our people in North America has been taken over by men who are determined to radically alter our church.

Because of the complexity of the matter, it would be best, first, to carefully review what led up to the present situation, and then present by itself each aspect of what has become a very dangerous spiritual crisis to our people.

- SECTION ONE -

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A FINANCIAL PROBLEM

Throughout the 1980s, the standards of our church were increasingly compromised and our distinctive teachings became more diluted. Frequently, they were not taught at all.

As more and more new theology pastors were graduated from our colleges and entered our churches, members frequently found that the conference office generally sided with the liberal pastor.

As a result, over a period of time a funding crisis began to develop. Many of the faithful conservatives began withholding their contributions. Others either left the church or were ejected by liberal pastors for protesting revised teachings, standards, and worship practices.

For their part, liberals were also upset because, in a number of areas, leadership was not making compromises fast enough.

At the same time, the prevailing lukewarmness was reducing missionary endeavors. Fewer bap-

tisms were taking place.

There was a solution. Even casual readings in the Bible or Spirit of Prophecy would have told what needed to be done. Surely, enough faithful church members had suggested it often enough: **Leadership on all levels should announce that they had decided to work with the faithful, historic believers to return the church to its former teachings and practices.**

But leadership hesitated. Such a course could have unpleasant results: (1) The liberals in the church would surely be displeased; although not as faithful in their contributions, they are very influential. (2) Church membership might shrink even more if the worldlings in the church left!

These were risks which many leaders felt they dare not take.

Basically, our leaders had to choose between the teachings and standards in God's Word—and the hope of stumbling upon some program which could greatly accelerate an increase in church membership. At the heart of the problem was a concern to increase donations. It seems evident that our leaders are most likely to go to the Philistines for help than obey God.

So by the mid-1980s, our leaders began sending out men to check on developments in the Protestant churches. The criteria were simple enough: **What were the methods and practices which were producing the most rapid church growth?** Unfortunately, keeping the worldlings and increasing church membership have become the standard by which our activities are to be judged.

How urgent it is, at such a time as this, that the people of God not deviate from the Inspired Books!

THE CELEBRATION CHURCH CRISIS

You will recall that, back in the late 1980s, North American Division leaders, with the full backing of the General Conference, decided to start Celebration churches. We wrote extensively about it at the time. (See our 84-page *Celebration Tractbook*; \$6.50 + \$3.00.)

The “Celebration Church” format consists of semi-Pentecostal worship music, theatrical skits, and other entertainments. **Yet, compared with some of what we are now being confronted with, our 1980s Celebration services were rather tame.**

We also began copying the “cell group” program, which had been started by a large Protestant church in South Korea. This was an attempt to hold small mid-week meetings, to better control and direct the thinking of church members into new channels. Each meeting began with a ridiculous game, designed to hush the conscience. Then a study was conducted, using lessons purchased from Protestant publishers. We earlier wrote on that also.

Our two pioneer Celebration churches were the New Life Celebration Church, in Milwaukie, Oregon, on the south side of Portland; and the Celebration Center in Colton, California.

The Milwaukie Church, under the leadership of Dave Snyder (who in earlier years had taken college training in theatrics), was for several years the North American Celebration Training Institute. Pastors were sent there from conferences throughout the U.S. and Canada. They were told to learn how to modernize and loosen up congregations—and

then told to go back home and do it.

Eventually, the Oregon Conference, at the urging of its president, Don Jacobsen, loaned the Milwaukie Church over a million dollars to build a large Celebration Church. But, about the time it was completed, the church split. Dave Snyder quit, immediately joined a Sunday church as associate pastor; and now he denounces Adventism.

Since then the remnant of the Milwaukie Church has split six more times, and currently is down to about a hundred members. No one knows how they will ever pay the massive loan they owe the conference.

Dan Simpson’s Celebration Center in Colton, California, received the full support of conference president, Steve Gifford, and remained bloated with curiosity seekers from area Adventist churches for several years. But then the novelty gradually wore off, and it dwindled.

One would imagine that church leaders might have learned their lesson from these catastrophes. Clearly, the Lord was not blessing the Celebration churches. **But our leaders had only begun exploring what the Protestant churches had to offer us; and they are determined to continue doing this. Surely, modern Protestantism could teach us new, modern approaches, not found in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. —And, frankly, they were right: The Bible and Spirit of Prophecy only contained directions to the Tree of Life; whereas the world had access to the Tree of Knowledge.**

Unfortunately, we had men who were determined, at any cost, to acquire it. —Surely, the angels must weep at what we are doing!

THE CELEBRATION CONCEPT

From about 1988 to 1993, every Adventist church gathering and camp meeting had the word, “Celebration,” tagged onto it. Think not that the word is used haphazardly. There is a theological concept underlying its use.

Modern Protestant theology teaches that we were all saved at the cross, and now need do nothing more than accept what Christ has already done. No behavioral changes are needed in order to be redeemed; only believe.

Men who obtained their doctorates in outside universities brought this concept into our midst and taught it to our ministers, editors, and administrators. We conservatives give it the label, “new theology.”

The word, “Celebration,” is a code word for

the basics of that new theology.

If it is true that you have already been saved, no changes now or later are required on your part; now you only need to sit back, enjoy the world,—and celebrate!

You celebrate something already done.

In great contrast, faithful Christians fight the good fight of faith and live by the enabling grace of Christ, to control themselves and help and bless others. Their concerns are with clean living and carrying on missionary work, not with frivolity and excitement.

The half-converted want religious meetings to be like television and sporting events: exciting and fun. Keep the adrenaline flowing.

Words closely related to “Celebration” are “festival” and “carnival.” The world loves all three.

THE SEARCH CONTINUED

It was not difficult for our leaders to find what they were looking for. Protestant journals regularly discussed the most active and fastest-growing congregations. Protestant ministers, having thrown out the law of God, have little to offer; so they are always looking for novelties to attract Sunday-goers.

All our leaders needed to do was to spy out the land, locate those congregations which had grown the fastest, and find out why; then they could copy their methods.

The Celebration Church experiment had reached its climax. By the early 1990s, we had a number of them, scattered here and there throughout the North American Division. Yet they were not having the success that our leaders wanted. Although they were supposed to bring in large numbers of non-Adventists, about all that happened was transfers-in from other area Adventist churches.

Then Willow Creek was discovered.

THE WILLOW CREEK CHURCH

Bill Hybels is a young man who wanted to start a new kind of Protestant church. But he decided to do it an entirely different way.

Instead of reading what the Bible said about church services or considering what any of the existing denominations have done over the past several hundred years, Bill decided to try out something totally new. His idea was actually quite shocking; but, due to the perversity of our carnal natures,—it worked.

First, young Hybels canvassed the community he had decided to settle in. Going from door to door, he asked people what they would like in a community meeting place. He found they wanted little of church and lots of entertainment, little of Christianity and lots of songs and theatrics, little of formality and lots of casualness and food, little of Christ and lots of other things. Second, he tried one thing and then another, to see what would bring high schoolers to a teenage church.

So Bill Hybels put it all together—and came up with the Willow Creek Community Church.

Fabulously successful, it was more of a community entertainment center than a church, such as you and I are acquainted with. This is because he used methods which appealed to half-grown kids.

—For more on the Willow Creek Church, see page 6 of this tract set. For still more information on the WCC, see the last page of this tractset.

OTHER CHURCHES BECAME INTERESTED

Hybels' church grew so fast, that other Protestant churches became interested. Several energetic, young pastors journeyed to Barrington, Illinois, determined to learn Hybels' secret of success.

When those young men started churches, some of them experienced the same kind of success. Frequently starting in a rented room, they provided what, in reality, was a social club for teens and young adults. Within a few years, there was a church of several hundred members. In some cases, it zoomed to several thousand. One outstanding example was the immense Saddleback Church in southern California.

Unknown to faithful Advent believers, our own leaders had become interested.

READY TO JUMP

Once again our leaders were confronted with the same lack of church growth. God was giving them a second chance to redeem the situation by returning to Him and obeying what His Word said to do.

Our church was on the edge of the precipice. Should we jump into the arms of the Sunday-keepers, and henceforth let them teach us how to start new churches—and what to teach in those churches?

There were only two avenues:

1 - A heartfelt return to God and earlier teachings and standards, whatever it might cost in the way of church membership.

2 - Activities which would appeal more strongly to worldlings, in order to increase membership.

The first would require wholehearted repentance, searching the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy and obeying everything discovered; these were solutions sure to bring outstanding success! Yet it would be success in gaining heaven, whether or not it would increase church membership. Some might leave; but just think of the genuine conversions that would have taken place! Consider the thousands of our young people, and the older ones as well, who would have found God!

With sadness, I must tell you that it did not happen. Our leaders were fearful to spread their problems before the Lord, as Hezekiah did in the Temple. They felt that sending away to Gaza and Gath for solutions was the better approach.

The first solution seemed too fraught with peril. Dangers too terrible to consider. Does not the devil always whisper that it is dangerous to obey God?

What had brought us to such an impasse? One

factor was that we had earlier handed our educational institutions over to men trained in outside universities; and, year after year, they had been busy in our colleges brainwashing our future leaders!

We now have men in leadership roles, on all levels, who are buying the line that God was not capable of solving the problem; we needed to turn to the Philistines.

THE WILLOW CREEK ASSOCIATION

Hybels was succeeding so well, that pastors of other Protestant churches begged him to teach them how to increase membership in their churches. Bill was happy to oblige; for it was his belief that bringing the unconverted into the church, without trying too hard to change them, was the way to evangelize the world for Christ.

So Hybels and his associates decided to start a training school. It was given the name, "The Willow Creek Association" (WCA).

Over a period of time, a remarkable array of instructional materials has been assembled: There are several different training conferences, workshops, instructional manuals, scripts, promotional and instructional videos, and recorded background music.

Church workers—especially younger ones who would be more susceptible to such a shocking change in religious presentations—are sent for training. At Willow Creek, they are told what to do and how to do it. They are also told how to train associate workers, local church youth, and young adults. In this way, susceptible minds are led into the new, entertainment-instead-of-worship channel.

A big advantage is that those who have attended the Leadership Training Course can sign up for loads of canned "worship" material: skit scripts, fun sermons, and frolic activities. If the local congregation is too small to have its own drums, guitars, and all the rest, background music tapes are also available.

—For more on the Willow Creek Association, see page 5 of this study set.

To our leaders, all this seemed like a wonderful solution. They saw in it several other advantages as well:

Instead of trying to new-model the existing churches, with all the friction that is generally produced,—they could start new congregations which operated on radically different lines. The new churches

would have freedom to try anything. If it worked, it was good.

In these new churches, little study of God's Word would be necessary, nor any obedience to it. The complaining conservatives could safely be ignored, because they would be tucked away in separate congregations.

The most outspoken liberals, heading toward the doors of our regular churches, might be encouraged to transfer over and help in the new churches.—And think of the evangelistic possibilities: thousands of "unchurched" might be brought in, to swell the ranks of those giving offerings!

So our leaders journeyed to Willow Creek also. And what did they learn there?

How to start social clubs. For that is what the Willow Creek pattern is: a grand social club, with considerable entertainment.

We can no longer send our pastors to Dave Snyder in Milwaukie for training. He had left us, to become a Sundaykeeping pastor.

So now we can send our pastors to an advanced Celebration training program—conducted by other Sundaykeeping pastors. The North American Division joined the Willow Creek Association.

- SECTION TWO - LAUNCHING THE PROGRAM

THE PROJECT BEGINS

On Wednesday through Sabbath, June 12 to 15, 1996, a special gathering of over 400 prominent church leaders and laymen in North America met, on the campus of Andrews University, to cement interest and launch the Church Planting Project.

Alfred C. McClure, president of the North American Division, was the keynote speaker. We have a complete copy of his address (later printed in the *Review*), and have quoted key portions in this study.

The gathering was called Seeds '96. Robert Logan, a Baptist church planter and vice president for new church development with Church Resource Ministries, had been hired as a professional consultant. He presented several motivational talks during the weekend meetings. How could we fail? We now had both Hybels and the Baptists training us!

Within a year, many Adventist pastors had been sent to Willow Creek, to attend leadership training seminars and obtain printed materials. In a num-

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THE WILLOW CREEK ASSOCIATION TRAINING PROGRAM

The following information has been gleaned from Willow Creek Association papers (Promotional sheets, WCA leadership conference materials, WCA web site).

You will find that the objective of this instruction is to teach other pastors how to bring “super Celebration” experiences to their local congregations, so the world will walk in the door and want to stay.

“Culturally relevant” is a code phrase for making your church more attractive to the worldlings outside your church, by doing more of the things inside the church that they like to do outside.

“Willow Creek Association trains churches to change to a ‘culturally relevant’ worship.”

“Bill Hybels and other veteran Willow Creek teachers cast the vision for **how to do church another way . . . by being culturally relevant.**”

“God’s Spirit is capturing the hearts of a growing number of forward-thinking leaders who are building churches with a new emphasis: The **presentation of the gospel in ways that penetrate secular culture . . .** They courageously follow God-directed change when it is needed—despite the risks involved.”

“**The goal of Willow Creek Association is to provide the kind of leadership and encouragement pioneering churches need to prevail in their efforts.**”

“The mission of the Willow Creek Association is to help churches turn irreligious people into fully devoted followers of Christ.”

“Our vision is to see churches **better relating** God’s solutions to the needs of both seekers and believers.”

“We serve member churches in these six key ways:

- Help you stretch scarce ministry dollars
- **Provide you with expertise and training**
- Expand your ministry network
- Provide you with ongoing encouragement

- **Serve as a catalyst for godly change**
- Provide you with a **trusted channel for ministry resources**
- WCA Church **Leadership Conferences**

“**Reaching Unchurched People: Training Courses** to help you reach unchurched people and build contagious small groups.

“**WCA Conferences and Workshops:** Learn how to build churches that reach unchurched people at the Church Leadership Conferences, and how to be a more effective pastor.

“**Ongoing Training Sessions:** Training to take you and your team to the next level of competence.

“**What the WCA offers you and your church:**

- **Conferences and Workshops:**
 - **Our Church Leadership Conferences:** Held twice a year at Willow Creek, these raise leaders’ vision for building prevailing churches that reach unchurched people.
 - **Specialized conferences each year:** These include **The Leadership Summit** and the **Student Impact Leadership Conference**. Additional conferences are being planned.
 - **Ministry Workshops:** Prior to each conference, 1-, 2-, and 3-day Ministry Workshops are offered. All of these events have proven to be catalysts for godly change in local churches.
- **Published Resources**—WCA publishes a wide array of **Willow Creek Resources** which serve as tools to help churches reach seekers and minister to believers:
 - **Books**
 - **Small group curriculum**
 - **Evangelism training courses**
 - **Spiritual gifts training courses**
 - **Videos**
 - **Drama scripts**
 - **Leadership training tapes**
 - **Background Music**

—What do they teach you to do? Turn to p. 14.

ber of localities, new churches began. Soon new churches were established on many of our college campuses in the North American Division.

On September 7-10, 1997, the second convention, SEEDS '97 (the word was now in full caps)

THE WILLOW CREEK CHURCH

Understanding how the Willow Creek Church began will help you understand the thinking underlying its methods, as currently being taught to large numbers of Protestant pastors and dozens of Adventist pastors.

In the early 1970s, a recent college graduate, Bill Hybels, was working at the South Park Church in Park Ridge, Illinois. Hybels wanted to figure out a way to get more high-school-age young people to come to church.

Gradually, by trying one thing and then another, he and several helpers found that three elements seemed to work best:

- Contemporary music, even though it might be wild.
- Dramatic skits, especially foolish ones.
- An instruction period that focused on topics of special interest to the young people.

The services grew from a handful of teenagers to 1,000 a night. Surprised at the response, Hybels wondered what would happen if he presented this to adults—the same type of jazz, bands, fun, skits, and talks.

Checking around, Hybels found he could rent a movie theater in Palatine, Illinois, on Sunday morning for very little. Since it was called the Willow Creek Movie Theater, he used the same name for the church.

On October 12, 1975, the first church service was held; but only 125 people came. The next week was even worse. But they kept holding meetings; and, by 1977, 2,000 were regularly attending.

By this time, crowds were standing, and something had to be done; so, that year, they bought 90 acres of farmland in South Barrington. The first service in the main auditorium was held in February 1981—and every year it grew larger.

Since 1981, the church has been located at the corner of Algonquin Road (Route 62) and Barrington Road in South Barrington, Illinois.

In 1988, the education wing was opened. One Saturday service was added, then another. Later, the building was doubled in size and the property was expanded to 155 acres.

Seating capacity in the main auditorium is

was held at Andrews, with over 450 in attendance. This time Russell Burrill, head of the North American Division Evangelism Institute, was the opening speaker. The announcement was made that 136 Adventist churches, following the Willow Creek pat-

4,500 people. When it was built in 1981, it sat 1,600 people. The auditorium (which includes the main floor, two main-floor risers, and three balconies) plus the main lobby is 78,000 square feet. The entire building is 352,000 square feet.

The chapel, which was opened in 1988, is used primarily for funerals and weddings; its capacity is 500 people. The activity center opened in 1991 as part of a 200,000-square-foot expansion. The atrium opened in 1991, and has a seating capacity of 750. There are 167 paid workers and a \$13 million annual budget.

The current attendance for its four weekend services, plus its Saturday night service for Generation X, is between 16,000 and 17,000 people, including about 3,000 children. The current attendance at its two midweek services (Wednesday and Thursday nights) is between 6,000 and 7,000 adults.

There are four identical weekend services in the main auditorium. “Using drama, multi-media, contemporary music, and a message that connects with people’s lives, the ageless wisdom of Scripture is presented in a creative, yet straightforward way.” The weekend services are Saturday, 5 and 7 p.m., and Sunday, 9 and 11:15 a.m.

This, of course, is somewhat remarkable! Hybels’ church has gotten so large, it has overflowed to two Saturday services! Yet these folk are solid Sundaykeepers, and the Saturday services are not considered sacred as are the Sunday services.

Willow Creek Church is not interested in spinning off satellite churches. Instead, it has chosen to keep expanding. (There are 1.5 million people living within a 20-minute drive of the church.) But, through its Willow Creek Association, it provides training seminars, leadership conferences, and written instructional materials; so other churches can use its methods, to increase the size of their churches.

Bill Hybels, founding and senior pastor of Willow Creek, is the author of a number of books. He also serves on the board of World Vision and as chairman of the Willow Creek Association’s board of directors.

The church phone number is 847-765-5000.

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tern, had been started in 1996.

In his address, Burrill noted that it was extremely important not to disturb existing Adventist congregations with these dramatically different worship services. When, later in this study, you learn what is presented in these new churches—and how it is presented,—you will understand why: Much of

the program consists of little more than cheap vaudeville, using Christian terminology.

Unfortunately, an ANN news item reported ominously that church leaders and workers from four other continents had attended SEEDS '97. The virus was rapidly spreading.

DRIVING A STAKE

“Today we drive a corner stake. Today we pour a footing. Today we nail the theses to the church door in Berringtonburg. Today this division launches the most aggressive and intentional church-planting initiative in its history.”—*Al McClure, North American Division President, Adventist Review, December 1996.*

“To accomplish this immense task [presenting the gospel], changes will have to take place. We need to change. So we have come here to change the way this division thinks about church planting. We have come here to change the way this division prioritizes church planting. We have come here to *change the way this division prepares people to do church planting.*”—*Al McClure, Adventist Review, December 1996.*

“Church planting needs to be recognized as true evangelistic work for God. *New. Different. Bold. Unusual.* Unsettling perhaps. But definitely true evangelistic work.”—*Adventist Review, December 1996.*

“However, while our theology is uncompromisingly biblical, our methodology needs to be predominantly cultural.”—*Al McClure, Adventist Review, December 1996.*

“Church planting is becoming a major evangelistic thrust of the Adventist Church in North America.”—*Adventist Review, December 19, 1996.*

“Alfred C. McClure’s passion for soul winning through church planting was evident from the first moments of his keynote address. He pointed out the need to change . . . He left no doubt that we are going to have to change our thinking.”—*Editorial, Adventist Review, December 19, 1996.*

“But now the church has heard God’s call to pick up the church planting shovel. Once again

it takes its rightful place among the tools of evangelism.”—*North American Division web site.*

“Russell Burrill says church planting will be a ‘front-burner issue’ in North America for years to come.”—*Al McClure, Adventist Review, December 19, 1996.*

“There are whole hosts of people out there who could be reached by a *different style* of ministry . . . Adventists need to plant new kinds of churches . . . planting churches that are truly both Adventist and culturally relevant will be addressed as this initiative develops.”—*Al McClure, Adventist Review, December 19, 1996.*

“Part of our task as Adventists is to translate, to convert eternal principles of the Adventist message into the people’s immediate context. That means leading into our message *through their culture, through their interest* . . . a contemporary worship . . . contoured to the needs and expectations of unchurched people”—*Adventist Review, March 1997.*

“Some say we are witnessing His Spirit create new wineskins in the form of new churches . . . We must be a praying church in the business of teaming with the Master in creating new wineskins—planting new churches.”—*NAD web site.*

“McClure used the meetings to sound a call to move the church toward a major church-planting strategy . . . The committee voted a resolution that calls for every union and conference executive committee in North America to make the organizing of new churches a high priority.”—*Editorial, Adventist Review, December 19, 1996.*

“We are mandated by Jesus Christ Himself to present ‘this gospel of the kingdom’ to this continent *in the most alluring manner* we know how. There is no greater issue for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.”—*Al McClure, Adventist Review, December 1996.*

In another report, it was mentioned that a large percentage of all Protestant pastors, being trained at Willow Creek—are Adventist pastors! We are more anxious to let the Philistines sharpen our axes than are the Philistines themselves.

One reason, frequently mentioned, for the change is that we need to stop using “the old wineskins.” What is meant by “old wineskins,” if not the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy? The books, *Gospel Workers* and *Evangelism* are filled with correct ways to carry on our evangelistic work.

You will find portions of several church articles in the next section. Most are from the *Review*.

A new standard had been adopted by our church in North America. It was not found in the diamond mines of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, but in the swamps of modern Protestantism.

QUOTATIONS WHICH TELL A LOT

Dave Bottroff, Rocky Mountain Conference pastor - Plusline Access, March/April 1996

“Whatever changes you implement, make them slowly over a period of many months (this is the most important thing to remember). Sudden turns in worship styles tend to throw saints around in their pews and you’ll be the one to get run over. Explain what you’re trying to accomplish and why. Take your members with you and most will enjoy the ride.”—*Dave Bottroff, Rocky Mountain Conference pastor, quoted in Plusline Access, March/April 1996. This is a paper sent by the North American Division to local elders.*

Church Planting Summit Brings Spirited Response - Adventist Review, September 19, 1996

“A movement was born when Adventists across North America converged on Andrews University for Seeds ’96, a church planting summit, June 12-15.

“More than 400 church members, pastors, administrators, and educators participated in this inauguration of a massive church planting endeavor . . .

“The Seeds conference included 15 seminars and presentations. NAD president Alfred C. McClure gave the keynote address. The overflow crowd interrupted McClure time after time with cheering, applause, and thunderous amens.

“‘We’ve come here this week to change the way this division thinks about church planting,’ said McClure. ‘This is the day that North America turns a corner. Today the North American church estab-

lishes a new battle plan. Today this division launches the most aggressive and intentional church planting in its history . . .

“‘It is imperative that we be willing to devise new wineskins to serve as vehicles for the water of life.’—*Church Planting Summit Brings Spirited Response, Adventist Review, September 19, 1996.*

Church Planting Summit Brings Spirited Response - Adventist Review, September 19, 1996

“NAD Evangelism Institute director Russell Burrill called it ‘the most significant address [McClure] has delivered as president.’

“Robert Logan, a Baptist church planter and vice president for new church development with Church Resource Ministries, served as professional consultant at the conference. He presented several motivational messages throughout the weekend.

“Logan’s comments to the Adventist crowd were significant. ‘There are whole hosts of people out there who could be reached by a different style of ministry while maintaining the integrity of the core beliefs that Adventists hold dear,’ he said . . . Logan believes Adventists need to plant new kinds of churches with the old Adventist message . . .

“Many left the four-day conference convinced this was a historic weekend in Adventism.”—*“Church Planting Summit Brings Spirited Response,” Adventist Review, September 19, 1996.*

Net ’98: A Friendly Dare, Andy Nash, Assistant to the Editor - Adventist Review, February 1997

“With word that Net ’98, featuring popular Andrews University pastor, Dwight Nelson, will not target Gen Xers, a question begs: Will it really?

“If so, then it must only faintly resemble its predecessors . . . They didn’t attract the younger crowd.

“Net ’98 must be radically different—just as my generation is radically different.

“A few suggestions:

“. . . Use tasteful humor . . . Get people laughing; it relaxes everyone. Where possible, offer a more casual setting. Sanctuary pews are great for reverence, but tough for community. In multiple-church areas, hold an Xers meeting in a designated auditorium. Let the relaxed atmosphere spur conversation and friendships.

“At these sites, serve food and drinks . . . free pizza . . . Encourage the local church to offer their own preliminaries: health tips, dramas, mono-

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logues, music . .

“A half hour early, open the local microphone for ‘one minute speeches.’ Invite the audience to tell about an influential person, an embarrassing moment, a time they felt close to God, etc. Let them laugh harder, cry harder, try harder than ever before . .

“Will Net '98 really connect with our secular peers? If so, it could be Pentecost.”—*Andy Nash, Adventist Review, February 1997.*

“Crossways: The spiritual journey of the collegians who went off to worship—and of the church that wanted them back, Ginger Ketting - Adventist Review, February 20, 1997

“Energy and expectancy hummed in the air as hundreds of students streamed into Pacific Union College’s Dauphinee Chapel on Sabbath morning in January 1992. A new phenomenon had electrified the campus; students were flocking to an alternative church service called Connections.

“The students packing Dauphinee’s pews contrasted sharply with pre-Connections student attendance at Sabbath morning worship services . .

“Louis Venden, then pastor of the PUC Church, gave his blessing to Connections for the sake of spiritual life . . Venden essentially gave permission for 1,600 potential attendees to split off and meet elsewhere.

“Invented by a group of college students, Connections was born of a desire to reach young adults in their own generational language, creating a relevant culture that would highly involve them in worship. The students did extensive preparation for the new worship service option, conducting surveys among their peers and researching concepts of worship.

“Their weekly approach, based on the results of their surveys, was simple: plenty of energetic singing accompanied by a band, a short student-made video addressing the subject for the week, and a talk by a student, faculty member, or guest speaker on a topic of spiritual relevance to college students. The service might also include drama and special music, and would be followed by fellowship and refreshments in the foyer . .

“Over succeeding months the Connections au-

dience climbed to 500, then to 700 students and community people . . Back at the main sanctuary attendance numbers looked bleak . .

“[At the urging of the College Church and the administration] the students . . eventually voted to recombine with the main PUC church service beginning that fall [of 1993]. A new service, Crossways, emerged from the discussions. It would still be planned by a committee composed of students and community young adults . .

“Students missed the freedom of Connections, he says, while some older members in the church were uncomfortable with the new and experimental changes being brought into the second worship service . .

“Another former student [who earlier had been educated at PUC to love Connections] said that . . his local [Adventist] church [elsewhere in America] was unwilling to grow and move, so he had been attending a Baptist church, where his needs were being met . .

“To students, Crossways sometimes seems too tame when compared to Connections, and the older generation often sees Crossways as pushing the edge too much. But I think we have so much to gain by going back and forth, finding a balance.”—*Ginger Ketting, “Crossways,” Adventist Review, February 20, 1997. [The PUC Church is listed elsewhere in this present study as members of the Willow Creek Association.]*

Worship on Other Adventist Campuses, Andy Nash - Adventist Review, February 20, 1997.

“Students at Pacific Union College aren’t the only ones trying different worship formats. Other Adventist collegians are finding alternative services either at their campus church—or apart from it. A sampling:

“Andrews University. In 1992 Andrews began ‘Sabbath Expressions,’ a praise-style second service at the university church. ‘We’ve really tried to accommodate the student mind,’ says Patrick Morrison, one of two university chaplains. Student singers rotate into the weekly praise set, with campus music groups frequently involved as well. During the school year the community is encouraged to attend first service to make room for students at

second service,' says Morrison. Just to be sure, every other second-service pew is reserved for students. (Attendance figures are unavailable.)

"Atlantic Union College. To combat declining student interest in campus worship, AUC has turned over six Sabbath morning services—four at the college church, two at a campus auditorium—to students this semester. College chaplain Rick Trott says that the college, including new president Sylvan Lashley, is determined to meet its students' worship needs. 'It's really a consumer market,' says Trott. 'We know that they don't have to come [to church] here.' Less than half of the student body attends church regularly, estimates Trott, with many attending off-campus churches.

"Columbia Union College. Nearby Sligo Adventist Church has offered a praise-style early service for years; but students weren't waking up in time, says 23-year-old college chaplain Rajkumar Dixit. Last year CUC began a 10:00 a.m. praise service called 'Community Church at CUC' in the boys' dorm chapel. The program is run solely by Gen Xers—half students, half community. The main preacher is 22-year-old Edward Chung. 'We're not trying to steal people from other churches,' says Dixit. 'We're targeting the bored and those who won't wake up for church.' " (Attendance figures are unavailable.)

"Oakwood College. Of Oakwood's 1,700 students, about half attend the traditional-style college church, while another 300 to 500 attend the praise-style Madison Mission, a community Adventist church that began as an evangelistic outreach, says college chaplain Anthony Medley. 'Some of the old guard feel [Madison] is divisive, but we look at it as more of an alternative,' says Medley. 'The goal is to get students to church.' Medley says that rather than modify the college church's worship format, Oakwood is focused on making worship a 'seven-day experience' through programs such as 'Evening Praise,' held each Sunday.

"Southern Adventist University. In the spring of 1994 a core group of students taped invitations to a new worship service called *Koinonia* (Greek for 'fellowship') on campus buildings. That Sabbath, 200 students packed Pierson chapel for a student-led program. Today about 400 students attend *Koinonia*, held every other week at the neighboring academy auditorium, says assistant chaplain Ryan Ashlock. A smaller number attends either the Collegedale church or other area churches, such as the praise-style Hamilton Community Church. A third 'don't attend church at all.'—"Worship on Other Adventist Campuses," *Andy Nash, Adventist Review, February 20, 1997.*

Live to Worship, Worship to Live: Gen X voices them, but deep down we all share the same worship needs. Stuart Tyner is Director of the Hancock Center for Youth Ministry, La Sierra University - Adventist Review, February 20, 1997

"At a large college church, more than 100 musicians crowd the platform for a musical festival of praise. The choir loft is packed. An electronic keyboard sits at an angle to the left. A brass ensemble is grouped at the right. Behind the brass, below the platform, tucked in back of a grand piano, sits a drummer at a large trap set . . .

"Twenty miles away a praise band leads another worship service. The drummer is front and center, making a significant contribution. The bulletin carries this advice: 'If you were born before 1967, please worship at one of the other services being held today' . . .

"Is genuine worship a matter of an authorized, common order of service? Is the God we worship concerned about whether the offering is taken before or after the special music? Should the worship discussion really be about drums in the sanctuary? Or are such arguments simply sidetracks? . . . All authentic worship is contemporary . . .

"Some churches post the sundown time at the front of the church, alongside the numbers of the hymns to be sung. I'm sure the composers of those cradle roll songs and the originator of the sundown time tradition were good people with genuine concerns about the 'edges of the Sabbath.' But is that really the theology we want our children to adopt?"—*Stuart Tyner, "Live to Worship, Worship to Live," Adventist Review, February 20, 1997.*

Making Waves: Don't look now, but Adventist artists are impacting contemporary Christian music circles. Their critics call it compromise. They call it ministry, Jeff Trubey - Adventist Review, July 17, 1997

"For Adventists, contemporary music is a term that constantly needs redefining. In the sixties and early seventies it was the acoustic guitar of the Wedgewood Trio, Tranquility, and Take Three. In the late seventies and eighties it was the harmonies of Harvest Celebration and the Heritage Singers. But it was in the early nineties that the vocal gymnastics of six young men from Oakwood College named Take 6 ushered in an unprecedented worldwide awareness of Adventist ministry through music . . .

"Today, more than at any other time, new and talented Adventist artists are connecting with young

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people in and out of the church . . .

“When the *Adventist Review* decided to revamp its image to reach a younger generation better, they had Faith First, a contemporary mixed quartet of twentysomethings, host the live-via-satellite launching event.

“Plans are also already under way to gear the church’s premier evangelistic event, Net ’98, toward secular young adults. ‘The church needs to be willing to speak in the language of the twenty-first century,’ says Dwight Nelson, senior pastor at Pioneer Memorial Church and speaker-designate for Net ’98. ‘We believe the music of Net ’98 will reach the younger generation with the fresh appeal of Jesus Christ.’

“Institutional support of contemporary artists has increased in the past few years. Chapel Music, home to the Heritage Singers and now Faith First, has expanded its music distribution system to include a contemporary division and offers an annual talent contest to discover new artists.

“Adventist Book Centers are seeing contemporary music by Adventist artists sell extremely well.”—*Jeff Trubey, “Making Waves,” Adventist Review, July 17, 1997.*

SEEDS ’97 Sets Vision for Growth, Cyril Miller

NAD vice president for Evangelism and Global Mission and Jack Stenger, Andrews University Information Officer - *Adventist Review, November 27, 1997.*

“An overflow crowd of nearly 450 heard evangelist Russell Burrill, director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute, speak . . . at the opening session of SEEDS ’97 . . . This second annual North American Church Planting Conference was held at Andrews University, September 7-10 . . .

“More than 136 new Adventist congregations were established in North America in 1996 . . . ‘New Adventist churches should not only be planted in areas where there are no existing churches,’ Burrill explained. ‘It’s equally important that the church planting movement move along generational lines. It could become increasingly common for two churches to exist in the same city—one a predominantly baby boomer congregation and another predominantly baby buster or Generation X. The worship needs of two generations can be just as distinct as the differences of style between different nationalities’ . . .

“‘A fire has been started that we don’t want to see go out,’ Burrill said.

“‘We’re here because church planting is a top priority for the North American Division,’ said

Alfred McClure, NAD president and a SEEDS ’97 speaker. McClure closed the conference by challenging delegates to return this division to the forefront of the church planting movement.”—*Cyril Miller and Jack Stenger, “SEEDS ’97 Sets Vision for Growth,” Adventist Review, November 27, 1997.*

450 Adventists Plant Seeds in Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA - ANN [Adventist News Network]

“A total of 450 pastors, church leaders and members convened at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan for SEEDS ’97, a church-planting conference. Representatives came from Africa, Europe, Australia, and South-east Asia as well as North America . . .

“SEEDS ’97 included a major seminar conducted by Bob Logan, church planting consultant, and about 15 afternoon seminars, which were well attended in spite of the heavy schedule.

“‘You could just feel the electricity in the air,’ declared Don Schneider, president of the Adventist churches in the Great Lakes region. ‘This group of people were excited about planting new churches to reach new people groups with uncompromised Adventism.’ [See page 14 for a view of “uncompromised Adventism.”] ‘SEEDS ’97 was excellent,’ concluded David Cox, director for Personal Ministries of the Adventist Church, southern England. ‘Last year the focus was simply on the concept of planting new churches for unreached people groups (different kinds of churches for different kinds of people). This year the emphasis was on planting reproducible churches, i.e. churches that plant churches,’ said Cox.

“SEEDS ’98 will continue the emphasis next year, July 15-18 at Andrews University. Robert Folkenberg, president of the Seventh-day Adventist World Church will be the speaker.”—*450 Adventists Plant Seeds in Berrien Springs, ANN.*

North American Evangelism Institute, Church Planting Courses - NADEI web site

[Special note: The NADEI is located at Andrews University and instructs every future Adventist minister, on the continent, in soul-winning methods. Look at what it is now teaching them:]

“A. Intercessory Prayer: Tapping the Power for Church Planting, Eduard Schmidt, Associate Director of North American Division Evangelism Institute

“B. Growing New Church: Through Dynamic Preaching and Worship. Dr. Mark Bresee, Senior Pastor, Hamilton Community Church, Chattanooga,

Tennessee

“C. How to Plant Adventist Churches: The Basics. Dr. Russell Burrill, Director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute

“D. Compassion Ministries in Church Planting: Cynthia Burrill, Instructor in Felt Needs, North American Division Evangelism institute. Dr. Phil Mills, Physician in Wichita Kansas, involved in Felt Needs

“E. Church Planting in Cross Cultural Contexts: Dr. Jon Dybdahl, Chair, Department of World Mission, Adventist Theological Seminary

“F. Planting an ‘Olive Garden’: Finding and Developing Your Market Niche, Ron Gladden, Ministerial Director, Oregon Conference of SDA

“G. Cell Church Plant: An Old, New Way to Plant a Church, Don James, Cell Church Small Group Consultant, Instructor, NADEI

“H. Wrestling the Alligators: Finding Solutions to Common Problems in Church Planting. Dr. Doug Kilcher, Chair, Christian Ministry Department, Adventist Theological Seminary

“I. Marketplace Christianity: Church Planting through Tent Making. Dr. Bruce Moyer, Director, Center for Global Urban Mission

“J. Could Church Planting Be Hazardous to Your Health? Robert Peach, Director, Kettering Clergy Care Center

“K. Growing a Church in the Real World: Ernest Young, Associate Director for Personal Evangelism, NADEI

“L. The Discover Bible School: A Dynamic Tool for Mobilization and Planting. Calvin Smith, Field Services Director for Discover Bible Schools, Voice of Prophecy

“M. Demographics: How to Use it in Church Planting. Carl Sobremisana, Associate Director, Center for Global Urban Mission

“N. The Power of Youth for Church Planting: Dr. Ron Whitehead, NAD Associate Youth Director and Associate Professor of Youth Ministries, Adventist Theological Seminary

“O. Resourcing a Church Multiplication Movement: (For church administrators, one time only). Dr. Robert E. Logan, Vice President for New Church Development, Church Resource Ministries

“P. Empowering Church Planters through Coaching: (For conference approved persons only). Steven L. Oagna, Director of New Church Development, Church Resource Ministries.”—*North American Evangelism Institute, Church Planting Courses, NADEI web site.*

Living to Worship in Atlanta, Ruthie Kerr - Adventist Review [date not known]

“The town to be turned upside down is Atlanta . . . The new church, named the New Community, will target the secular people of Generation X (the generation that follows the baby boomers).

“The New Community is exactly what its name implies. It’s new—with a focus on community. [Georgia-Cumberland Conference president, Gordon] Bietz says the New Community doesn’t branch from another Adventist church. ‘We’re not just wrapping religion in the same style and format,’ he says.

“[Alex] Bryan, the 26-year-old pastor, plans to incorporate multimedia, contemporary music, and dramatic arts to build a worship service that is very creative and authentic. ‘We will incorporate many different things with excellence,’ he says.

“At the service Xers will be challenged spiritually without being smothered with religion. ‘The big thing is we’ve got to allow the language of our generation,’ says Bryan, who credits many of his ideas to leadership seminars he attended at Willow Creek Community Church, a nondenominational church in northern Chicago.

“Like Willow Creek, the New Community will be a place Xers can invite their secular friends to church and not be embarrassed. Visitors to the church will not be asked to stand up or give money. Their clothes and appearance won’t matter.”—*Ruthie Kerr, Living to Worship in Atlanta, Adventist Review [date not known].*

Adventists Want to “Make Gospel Relevant,” Jonathan Gallagher - Adventist News Network, January 20, 1998

“Silver Spring, Maryland, USA [ANN]. In a bold attempt to ‘make the gospel relevant’ to peoples of widely different backgrounds and customs, Seventh-day Adventist leaders and Global Mission Study Center directors met January 13-15 at the Church’s World Headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA.

“The Church’s strategy is to present the Bible and salvation in terms that people will understand. This may mean that ‘traditional’ methods will need to be adapted to fit the cultural perspectives of those being addressed, according to Mike Ryan, General Field Secretary at the Global Mission office.

“‘We must face the challenge of making the gospel relevant in different circumstances and situations,’ says Ryan. ‘That is why we have taken the

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Continued from the preceding tract in this series

initiative of creating Global Mission Study Centers in different parts of the world.'

"So far Centers have been established for Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and the Urban/Secular mind.

"Issues discussed included how Adventists might use different scriptures and holy books, how contextualization is different to syncretism, the essence of the message, and the identity, structure and organization of the Church.

"The meetings helped clarify the Church's relevancy as well as the need to maintain its own integrity, reports Gary Krause, Communication director for Global Mission.

" 'We cannot communicate in the same way to people of many different backgrounds,' says Krause. 'The presentation of the gospel needs to be contextualized so that people can understand. We're just helping people where they're at.' "—*Jonathan Gallagher, "Adventists Want to 'Make Gospel Relevant,' "* *Adventist News Network, January 20, 1998.*

THE UNDERLYING WEAKNESS

First: It is a cheap, low-grade diet. For nearly a hundred years, advertisers have found that they do best when they aim for the 12-year-old mind. Television producers have followed the same dictum since 1950. Hand the people a junk diet, and they will gobble it up.

Willow Creek succeeded so astoundingly well, because it began by trying to provide baby food to teenagers.

Second: It does not deepen spirituality. Cheap, tinny music and canned skits only empty the soul the more. It leaves those who watch it shallow-rooted in a surface appearance of Christianity. People do not grow strong in Christ and enter into a life of self-sacrifice for the good of others.

Third: It succeeds only by feeding on itself. The people come out of curiosity, and stay only as long as the cheap diet is provided. Then they wander away after other shallow things.

Fourth: This is not God's way of bringing souls to Christ. Our NAD leaders imagine that people can be brought into the church by giving

them worldly entertainment, and then leading them to Christ. That is not true! Our leaders are not reading the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. God does not work in this manner. We are not to use worldly methods or worldly content, week after week, thinking that it will lead to genuine conversions.

Fifth: Genuine Christianity does not begin in this way. The worldling has no taste for Christianity. Christianity leads one to be broken before the Lord; repent deeply of his sins; surrender himself to Christ; and becomes a quiet, self-distrustful child of God. He becomes quietly worshipful. The old egotism, boasting, and craving for artificial excitement is gone.

Sixth: Genuine Christianity does not continue this way. There is no "broken on the Rock" experience, no deep repentance for sin, no self-sacrifice for the good of others, and next to no instruction in righteousness. There is no purpose nor objective other than continued entertainment. The institutions and activities of Christians provide examples of Christian living in action. We do not see that here.

Seventh: It ruins the Christian experience of Adventists who happen to become involved. Faithful Advent believers who go to these meetings, gradually find their experience hollowing out. They are being trained to like something different, something very worldly. They are being weaned away from Christ, not to Him.

Eighth: We are a moving church. Adventists are always on the move, transferring to other congregations, moving to new locations. As they do so, they either find themselves at a planted church or they may be a planted-church fan—who now must attend a regular congregation. This spreads the excitement virus around.

Ninth: Everyone in the NAD is damaged by these new churches. If I am a faithful Anglican, and I have learned that church headquarters has approved women pastors, adulterous or (practicing) homosexual ministers or members, then my spirituality is weakened. I am tacitly supporting what is taking place. Everyone in the body is weakened when leadership has approved part of the body to live in rebellion against Christ.

Tenth: Weakness, not strength, is the fruit of trying to go in two directions at the same time.

HERE IS A PLANTED CHURCH

After you have read about the Oasis Christian Center, you will have a better idea of what NAD “church planting” is all about:

The Oasis Christian Center, located in Vancouver, Washington, is an excellent example of what these glorious new “culturally relevant” church planting projects are like.

It contains most of the essential elements of these new-style worship congregations. Its leaders have received careful training at Willow Creek. What they learned, they have put into practice. Here it is:

Church worship consists of a live band, foolish drama skits (done for lots of laughs), comic strips on an overhead projector screen, magic shows, on-stage dancing by a woman to excite the men, and all done with strange back lighting effects which give the appearance of a witches’ den.

The North Pacific Union *Gleaner* says that this is a Seventh-day Adventist church. The Oasis “worship bulletin,” which carries weekday classified ads, says it is “interdenominational.” Which one is telling the truth?

This is one of the “culturally relevant” planted churches, which McClure spoke about.

On the bottom left of their “Oasis History” page, in their web site, is the “Willow Creek Association” logo. On the bottom right is the “It Is Written” logo. The left logo tells Protestants it is a Sundaykeeping Protestant church; the right logo tells Adventists it is Adventist and safe to attend.

Last, but not least, this particular “planted church” holds its weekend church services, year around, on Saturday night at 6 to 7 p.m. This means that, in the winter, its only weekend worship services are on Sunday.

The following six quotations will provide you with an even better understanding of what this church is like:

“Find out more about Vancouver’s new Saturday night church (6-7 p.m.). Our vision is to create an atmosphere that is fun, meaningful, inspiring, relevant, and spiritually deep. Real refreshment without the formal aftertaste. The Oasis features a live band, video clips, the ‘Lighter Side of Church,’ multi-media, humorous drama, a Kid’s Zone program, and a nursery!”—*Web site ad,*

Oasis Christian Center, Vancouver, Washington.

“The Oasis is real refreshment if:

“You believe in a God, but don’t really enjoy going to church,

“You prefer a live band to the organ and choir,

“You want a safe place to invite your friends to check out the claims of Jesus Christ,

“You’d like multi-media, movie clips, humorous drama, Kid’s Zone programs, a nursery, good refreshments.”—*Web site ad, Oasis. [Their web site also has links to five humor and cartoon pages, as well as ventriloquism and puppetry.]*

“The Oasis is a positive, new interdenominational event. Some have called it ‘a church for people who don’t like church.’ It’s relevant. It’s different. It’s refreshing. All Oasis events are free and feature excellent Contemporary Christian Music, drama, multi-media, and a great kid’s program.”—*Church bulletin, Oasis, February 15, 1997.*

“The ‘Mirage’ drama team will hold a drama playshop on Sunday, April 27, from 7-9 p.m. in Vancouver, Wash. During the two-hour event, which consists of name-games, relaxation exercises, laugh-athons, and interactive games, participants will learn about acting and how drama can be used to create powerful message illustrations. ‘Mirage’ is an official ministry of the Oasis Christian Center. For information on location and how to sign up, phone Paddy McCoy at 360-573-3362.”—*North Pacific Union Gleaner announcement notice, Oasis, April 7, 1997.*

“Roommate needed: 3 bedroom home. \$500/month with utilities. Washougal. Call Larry Fandrich (263-6304)

“Free to good home. 2 year old cat. Declawed, with shots, housebroken. Good family pet. Call Rob (573-5010).

“For sale: Good Trailer & 12 channel sound system. Call Jerry (882-2856).”—*Oasis Worship Bulletin.*

“Quenching Life’s Real Thirst—Hey! We’ve moved! Now we have a facility big enough to host the Oasis event, as it’s been growing by leaps and bounds the last few months.

“And our new kid’s church is even better than before! More room to learn about God, enjoy music, arts and crafts, and play, play, play!”—*Oasis web notice.*

WCA MEMBER CHURCHES WHICH HAVE "SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST" IN THEIR NAME

A search of the thousands of local churches which are members of the Willow Creek Association produced a list of 39 churches which had the name, "Seventh-day Adventist," in their names.

But several facts should be kept in mind:

- The number of Adventist churches which have joined the WCA are constantly increasing, as more and more Adventist pastors are sent to WCA headquarters for training.

- Most WCA Adventist churches do not include "Seventh-day Adventist" in their church names. (A few of those are included in a second list, below.)

- All our WCA Adventist churches use the church service methods taught them by WCA!

- Notice that several entire conference offices are included (Greater New York, Dakota, Alaska, etc.) and one Union office (Canadian Union)

- Some of our most important colleges are listed (Pacific Union College, Union College, Kettering College).

- Several academies are included (Forest Lake, Ozark, etc.).

- Several of our most important churches are included (Sligo, Hinsdale, Florida Hospital, etc.)

Here, in alphabetical order, is the first list:

Alexandria Seventh-day Adventist Church
Alexandria, VA (703) 548-5998

Beaverton Seventh-day Adventist Church
Beaverton, OR (503) 646-9828

Brunswick Seventh-day Adventist Church
Brunswick, ME (207) 729-3346

Burleson Seventh-day Adventist Church
Burleson, TX (817) 295-7141

Calgary Mountain View Seventh-day Adventist Church
Calgary, AB CANADA (403) 247-0792

College View Seventh-day Adventist Church
Lincoln, NE (402) 486-2880

Corvallis Seventh-day Adventist Church
Corvallis, OR (541) 757-8983

Courthouse Road Seventh-day Adventist Church
Richmond, VA (804) 794-1285

Dakota Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church
Pierre, SD (605) 224-8868

Door of Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church
Fort St. John, BC CANADA (250) 785-3490

Florida Hospital Seventh-day Adventist Church
Orlando, FL (407) 898-0451

Forest Lake Seventh-day Adventist Church
Apopka, FL (407) 869-0680

Foster Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church
Asheville, NC (704) 274-2014

Gentry Seventh-day Adventist Church
Gentry, AR (501) 736-8808

Glen Ellyn Seventh-day Adventist Church
Glen Ellyn, IL (630) 858-8510

Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists - Manhasset, NY (516) 627-9350

Hanover Seventh-day Adventist Church
Hanover, PA (717) 637-5884

Hinsdale Seventh-day Adventist Church
Hinsdale, IL (308) 323-0182

Hutchinson Seventh-Day Adventist Church
Hutchinson, KS (316) 662-8741

Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church
Kettering, OH (513) 298-2167

Mandarin Seventh-day Adventist Church
Jacksonville, FL (904) 268-7476

Milpitas Adventist Center
Milpitas, CA (408) 263-8137

Mountain View Seventh-day Adventist Church
Las Vegas, NV (702) 871-0814

New Community Seventh-day Adventist Church
Miami, FL (305) 233-0799

New Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church
Burtonsville, MD (301) 776-4122

North Oshawa Seventh-day Adventist Church
Oshawa, ON CANADA (905) 404-9357

Olathe Seventh-day Adventist Church
Olathe, KS (913) 764-5655

Peachtree City Seventh-day Adventist Church
Sharpsburg, GA (770) 253-8291

Paradise Seventh-day Adventist Church
Paradise, CA (916) 877-4454

Saint Albert Seventh-day Adventist Church
St. Albert, AB CANADA (403) 458-4644

Saint Catharines Seventh-day Adventist Church
Saint Catharines, ON CANADA (905) 646-4490

Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church
Takoma Park, MD (301) 270-6777

Southfield Seventh-day Adventist Church
Southfield, MI (810) 559-6368

South Greene Seventh-day Adventist Church
Greeneville, TN (423) 638-2562

Stone Mountain Seventh-day Adventist Church
Stone Mountain, GA (770) 469-0111

Sunnyside Seventh-day Adventist Church
Portland, OR (503) 252-8080

Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada
Oshawa, ON CANADA (905) 433-0011

Tracy Seventh-day Adventist Church
Tracy, CA (209) 835-5342

York Seventh-day Adventist Church
York, PA (717) 792-5572

In addition, there are a number of other known Seventh-day Adventist WCA churches, most of which do not have “Seventh-day Adventist” in their names.

Damascus Road Community Church—Maryland
Alaska Conference of SDA—Anchorage, Alaska
Hamilton Community Church—Chattanooga, Tenn
Durango SDA church—Durango, Colorado
Christ Advent Fellowship—Colorado
Wakefield SDA church—Maine
Oasis Christian Center—Washington
Minnetonka SDA church—Minnesota
Tacoma Central SDA Church—Washington
Kelso-Longview SDA Church—Washington
North Hill Christian Fellowship—Washington
New Church Plant—BC, Canada
New Life Christian Fellowship—Washington
Center for Creative Ministry—Nebraska
New Life Celebration Church—Oregon
New Life Community Church of SDA—Kansas
New Life SDA Church—Canada
South Hills Bible Fellowship—Pennsylvania
Son Valley Fellowship—Canada
Pacific Union Collage SDA Church—California

As Russell Burrill noted in one of the quoted articles, church leaders believe they can keep the two radically different worship types separate and vibrant. This cannot be done. No organization or denomination can succeed when it tries to do two opposite things at the same time. There are liberal groups and there are conservative organizations in the world, but none of them try to actively promote both sides at the same time. To attempt to do so will lead to the destruction of the organization.

Eleventh: Such a course is going to head our denomination toward a collision. Either the liberals will rebel and try to take over or leave (and Satan will make sure that will not occur very often), or the conservatives will.

Twelfth: A basic weakness of the project is the Bible Sabbath. Church leaders dare not abandon it; yet the world is not going to enter Adventism in droves, as hoped, as long as we stick with Saturday church services. Watch this point. Something is likely to happen here. When leaders become so desperate to attract the world that they resort to magic shows, dancing women, wild music, and clown acts,—they may start considering “temporary” Sunday meetings to attract larger audiences.

—Having said that, I may be wrong. Would not

the devil just love to see worldlings flock into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in droves? That was how he rapidly corrupted the Christian church in the time of Constantine I.

When church leaders are willing to open the doors, in an abandonment of nearly all standards, trouble is coming. (I say “nearly all standards.” We still forbid smoking, liquor, and hard drugs on church premises; almost anything else is acceptable.)

Men who have lost their spiritual understanding have gained control of the North American Division. And you can know that they have the full backing of the General Conference. Both are headquartered in the same building. It would also be necessary for the NAD to have the support of a majority of union presidents and most conference presidents. If the General Conference and NAD unions wished to do so, they could very quickly find ways to stop what the NAD is trying to do.

By the way, what shall we call these monstrosities? They are “Celebration Churches,” which means they are “entertainment churches.” They can also be referred to as the “planted churches.” Satan is using deluded leaders to plant them in our midst, to sweep us all away.

The Church Planting Project

PART FIVE OF FIVE

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

- SECTION THREE - SCRIPTURAL COUNSEL

“We are not at liberty to teach that which will reach the world’s standard, or the standard of the church, because it is the custom to do so!”—*19 Manuscript Release*, 75.

“An enemy has been at work to destroy our faith in the sacredness of Christian worship.”—*5 Testimonies*, 496.

“We must not have a sensational religion, which has no root in truth.”—*Evangelism*, 364.

“We do not want a sensational religion; but we want a religion founded on intelligent faith. This faith plants its feet on the eternal rock of God’s Word.”—*Review and Herald*, April 9, 1889.

“Many urge that by uniting with worldlings and conforming to their customs they might exert a stronger influence over the ungodly. But all who pursue this course thereby separate from the Source of their strength. Becoming the friends of the world, they are the enemies of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 607.

“The church is not to come down to take a position with the world in its ideas, opinions, and maxims.”—*Review*, July 31, 1894.

“The devil has much power to imitate and counterfeit the work of God as he did in Moses’ time.”—*The Early Years (1827-1862)*, 77.

“I saw that the mysterious signs and wonders, and false reformations would increase, and spread. The reformations that were shown me, were not reformations from error to truth; but from bad to worse.”—*Review*, August 1, 1849.

“Pray for divine enlightenment . . . that when the wonderful miracle-working power of Satan shall be displayed, and the enemy shall come as an angel of light, you may distinguish between the genuine work of God and the imitative work of the powers of darkness.”—*Review*, December 24, 1889.

“In the truth there is a power which no outward appearance or display can give, which no worldly suppositions or opinions can change or alter.”—*Medical Ministry*, 161.

“There are two extremes to be avoided: one is the shunning to declare the whole counsel of God, and running into the spirit of revivalists in this age . . . and weaving into the labors an element which moves the feelings but leaves the heart unchanged. A sensational religion

is to be dreaded, for it is hard work . . . to ever make the individuals feel that they must go deeper than mere emotional exercise; that they must practice true godliness.”—*17 Manuscript Releases*, 101.

“At every revival of God’s work the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity; he is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures.”—*Great Controversy*, 593.

“The character and tendency of modern revivals . . . have given no evidence of the work of the Spirit of God . . . Popular revivals are too often carried by appeals to the imagination, by exciting the emotions, by pandering to the love for what is new and startling. Converts thus gained have no more desire to listen to Bible truths, no more interest in the testimony of prophets and apostles, than has the novel reader. Unless a religious service has something of a sensational character, it has no attractions for them.”—*4 Spirit of Prophecy*, 294.

“Before the final visitation of God’s judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times . . . The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work, and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power, he will make it appear that God’s special blessing [Holy Spirit] is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest . . . There is an emotional excitement, a mingling of the true with the false, that is well adapted to mislead. Yet none need be deceived. In the light of God’s Word it is not difficult to determine the nature of these movements. Wherever men neglect the testimony of the Bible, turning away from those plain, soul-testing truths which require self-denial and renunciation of the world, there we may be sure that God’s blessing is not bestowed.”—*Great Controversy*, 464.

“Educate the people to have a sound, solid experience, and do not create in them an appetite for something new and strange and startling. These are the very things which those who are weak in moral power crave as the liquor drinker craves liquor, and the result is that they are not sound in the understanding of the Word. They have not root in themselves, and when the masterly working of Satan shall be made manifest, and he

shall perform miracles to testify that he is Christ, those who have been controlled by feeling, who have fed on the sensational, and have been seeking for strange things, will be carried away, because they are not feeding on Christ.”—*14 Manuscript Releases*, 188.

“In forming an alliance with a heathen nation, and sealing the compact by marriage with an idolatrous princess, Solomon rashly disregarded the wise provisions that God had made for maintaining the purity of His people. The hope that this Egyptian wife might be converted was but a feeble excuse for the sin. In violation of a direct command to remain separate from other nations, the king united his strength with the arm of flesh.”—*Adventist Home*, 64.

“People should not be educated to think that religion of an emotional order, bordering on fanaticism, is the only pure religion. Under the influence of such religion the minister is expected to use all his nervous energy in preaching the gospel . . . There are those who, unless their decaying emotions are stimulated, think they can be careless and inattentive.”—*2 Selected Messages*, 21.

“A new order of things has come into the ministry. There is a desire to pattern after other churches, and simplicity and humility are almost unknown. The young ministers seek to be original, and to introduce new ideas and new plans for labor. Some open revival meetings, and by this means call large numbers into the church. But when this excitement is over, where are the converted ones? Repentance and confession of sin are not seen. The sinner is entreated to believe in Christ and accept Him,—without regard to his past life of sin and rebellion. The heart is not broken. There is no contrition of soul. The supposed converted ones have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus.

“The Old and New Testament Scriptures show us the only way in which this work should be done. Repent, repent, repent, was the message rung out by John the Baptist in the wilderness. Christ’s message to the people was ‘Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish’ (Luke 13:5). And the apostles were commanded to preach everywhere that men should repent . . . The sinner must be labored for, perseveringly, earnestly, wisely, until he shall see that he is a transgressor of God’s law, and shall exercise repentance toward God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.”—*2 Selected Messages*, 18-19.

“It is made manifest when church-members follow the maxims of the world, that their spiritual discernment is gone.”—*Review*, August 23, 1892.

“The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation. Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be shouting, with drums, music, and dancing . . . And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit.

“The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of

Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time. Better never have the worship of God blended with music than to use musical instruments to do the work which last January was represented to me would be brought into our camp meetings.

“The truth for this time needs nothing of this kind in its work of converting souls. A bedlam of noise shocks the senses and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing. The powers of satanic agencies blend with the din and noise, to have a carnival, and this is termed the Holy Spirit’s working.

“When the camp meeting is ended, the good which ought to have been done and which might have been done by the presentation of sacred truth is not accomplished. Those participating in the supposed revival receive impressions which lead them adrift. They cannot tell what they formerly knew regarding Bible principles.

“No encouragement should be given to this kind of worship. The same kind of influence came in after the passing of the time in 1844. The same kind of representations were made. Men became excited, and were worked by a power thought to be the power of God.”—*2 Selected Messages*, 36-37.

“The world knows not the Father or the Son, and they have no spiritual discernment as to the character of our work, as to what we shall do or shall not do . . . We are not to hear the counsel or follow the plans suggested by unbelievers.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 463.

“The Lord showed me that erroneous theories and methods would be brought into our camp meetings, and that the history of the past would be repeated. I felt greatly distressed. I was instructed to say that at these demonstrations demons in the form of men are present, working with all the ingenuity that Satan can employ to make the truth disgusting to sensible people; that the enemy was trying to arrange matters so that the camp meetings, which have been the means of bringing the truth of the third angel’s message before multitudes, should lose their force and influence.

“Thus Satan tries to put his stamp upon the work God would have stand forth in purity. The Holy Spirit has nothing to do with such a confusion of noise and multitude of sounds as passed before me last January. Satan works amid the din and confusion of such music, which, properly conducted, would be a praise and glory to God. He makes its effect like the poison sting of the serpent.”—*2 Selected Messages*, 37.

“I am instructed that we shall meet with all kinds of experiences and that men will try to bring strange performances into the work of God. We have met such things in many places. In my very first labors the message was given that all theatrical performances in connection with the preaching of present truth were to be discouraged and forbidden . . . The light given me was, ‘Give this no sanction.’ These performances, which savored of the

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theatrical, were to have no place in the proclamation of the solemn messages entrusted to us.”—*Evangelism*, 137.

“Like ancient Israel the church has dishonored her God by departing from the light, neglecting her duties, and abusing her high and exalted privilege of being peculiar and holy in character . . . They have joined with the selfish and world-loving.”—*2 Testimonies*, 441-142.

“What was the origin of the great apostasy? How did the church first depart from the simplicity of the gospel? By conforming to the practices of paganism, to facilitate the acceptance of Christianity by the heathen.”—*Great Controversy*, 384.

“In their efforts to reach the people, the Lord’s messengers are not to follow the ways of the world.” *Evangelism*, 508

“I am instructed to say . . . there is to be no compromise in order to meet the world’s standards. God’s commandment-keeping people are not to unite with the world to carry various lines of work according to worldly plans and worldly wisdom.”—*Medical Ministry*, 61.

“God’s workmen must not follow after the world’s practices and customs in the least.”—*Bible Echo*, May 21, 1894.

“We must follow the directions given through the Spirit of prophecy. We must love and obey the truth for this time. This will save us from accepting strong delusions. God has spoken to us through His Word. He has spoken to us through the Testimonies to the church, and through the books that have helped to make plain our present duty and the position that we should now occupy.”—*8 Testimonies*, 298.

“The marks of distinction between Christ’s professed people and the world have almost disappeared. Like ancient Israel, they follow after the abominations of the nations around them.”—*1 Testimonies*, 277.

“God’s remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform.”—*Conflict and Courage*, 269.

“It is only as the law of God is restored to its rightful position that there can be a revival of primitive faith and godliness among His professed people. ‘Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein’ (Jeremiah 6:16).”—*Faith I Live By*, 326.

“Satan has ever been ambitious to counterfeit the work of Christ, and establish his own power and claims. He does not generally do this openly and boldly. He is artful, and knows that the most effectual way for him to accomplish his work is to come to poor fallen man in the form of an angel of light.”—*Messages to Young People*, 57-58.

“In many of the revivals . . . There is an emotional excitement, a mingling of the true with the false, that is well adapted to mislead. Yet none need be deceived . . . Wherever men neglect the testimony of the Bible, turning away from those plain, soul-testing truths which

require self-denial and renunciation of the world, there we may be sure that God’s blessing is not bestowed.”—*Great Controversy*, 464.

“Whenever and wherever the Lord works in giving a genuine blessing, a counterfeit is also revealed, in order to make of none effect the true work of God. Therefore we need to be exceedingly careful, and walk humbly before God, that we may have spiritual eyesalve that we may distinguish the working of the Holy Spirit of God from the working of that spirit that would bring in wild licence and fanaticism.”—*Review*, February 6, 1894.

“I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, ‘Father, give us Thy Spirit.’ Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace.”—*Early Writings*, 56.

“Like the Jews, who offered their useless sacrifices, they [those who reject the first angel’s message] offer up their useless prayers to the apartment which Jesus has left; and Satan, pleased with the deception, assumes a religious character, and leads the minds of these professed Christians to himself, working with his power, his signs and lying wonders, to fasten them in his snare . . . He also comes as an angel of light and spreads his influence over the land by means of false reformations. The churches are elated, and consider that God is working marvelously for them, when it is the work of another spirit.”—*Early Writings*, 261.

“I saw that God has honest children among the nominal Adventists and the fallen churches . . . and before the loud cry of the third angel is given, he [Satan] raises an excitement in these religious bodies, that those who have rejected the truth may think that God is with them. He hopes to deceive the honest and lead them to think that God is still working for the churches.”—*Early Writings*, 261.

“How much I have thought upon the popular revivals . . . Advantage is taken of the impulses of the moment . . . Reformation in life is needed, but the reformation made under excitement will seldom outlast the excitement in which it originated. Conversions made by moving the feelings and by the relation of anecdotes and sensational stories, do not bear the impress of Heaven. Heart work is needed. The sinner needs to have a clearly defined understanding of what sin is, and that he must repent of sin, which is the transgression of the law of God. When this is understood the seed is sown for a true and thorough conversion.”—*Signs*, August 12, 1875.

“Some open revival meetings, and by this means call large numbers into the church. But when the excitement is over, where are the converted ones? Repentance and confession of sin are not seen. The sinner is entreated to believe in Christ and accept Him, without regard to his past life of sin and rebellion. The heart is

not broken. There is no contrition of soul. The supposed converted ones have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus.”—*3 Manuscript Releases*, 27.

“The reason there are so many spurious conversions in these days is that there is so low an appreciation of the law of God. Instead of God’s standard of righteousness, men have erected a standard of their own by which to measure character . . . but the kindest thing that can be preached to the sinner is the truth of the binding claims of the law of God.”—*Faith and Works*, 96.

“‘Preach the Word.’ Compared with the Word, everything else is weakness itself. The Word of God is the weapon of our warfare. Educate, train the people to be doers of the Word.”—*14 Manuscript Releases*, 188.

“The season of distress before God’s people will call for a faith that will not falter. His children must make it manifest that He is the only object of their worship, and that no consideration, not even that of life itself, can induce them to make the least concession to false worship. To the loyal heart . . . Truth will be obeyed though the result be imprisonment or exile or death.”—*Prophecies and Kings*, 512-513.

“Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen . . . for the customs of the people are vain.”—*Jeremiah 10:2-3*.

“Cry Aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.”—*Isaiah 58:1*.

“Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.”—*Ezekiel 16:2*.

“Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but My people have changed their glory for that

which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”—*Jeremiah 2:11-13*.

“For the Lord of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke Me to anger in offering incense unto Baal.”—*Jeremiah 11:17*.

“Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say . . . Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not lying words, saying . . . The temple of the Lord are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor . . . Then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.”—*Jeremiah 7:2-7*.

“O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in Mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build it and to plant it; if it do evil in My sight, that it obey not My voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.” *Jer. 18:6-10*.

“I will destroy My people, since they return not from their ways.”—*Jeremiah 15:7*.

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