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“Adventist Sunday Church.” Shocking? It ought to be.

I did not give it that name; the Pacific Union Recorder did. They emblazoned it across the top of page one of a two-page article in their February 2000 issue. It is not only being done by at least one local congregation, it is recommended for other churches to do. The article says it is being done elsewhere in our denomination.

As the apostasy deepened in our denomination in the 1980s, I wondered what would be the key points, on which our journey down the slippery slope would accelerate. **One would be required obedience to God’s law. We began discarding that in the 1980s. An advanced step much further downward would be Sunday morning worship services.**

The key issues are summed up in Revelation 14:12, one of the most-quoted, most-emphasized Bible verses in the Spirit of Prophecy.

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” [can be translated, “by faith in Jesus”].

This verse teaches obedience to the law of God through the enabling grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the identifying mark of God’s true people in the last days. It is the definition by which we can identify those who are in the “remnant.” And how do we identify the “remnant”? The definition is given in Revelation 12:17:

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman,

and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

Obedience to the law of God through the grace of Christ. This is a cooperative act. It requires divine power combined with human decision and effort. Without that combination, no man can be saved; for God saves no man apart from his decision to repent of his sins and, with divine help, put them away. **The Bible Sabbath is a key issue in these last days. Seventh-day Adventists do a lot of compromising with the Sabbath truth: in the way they keep it and what they say about it.**

Not only do many of our people hardly keep it properly, but they are now being taught that it does not matter much whether they keep it or not. “Only believe, and you are saved,” is the cry of apostasy in Protestantism and liberal Adventism.

At the present time, it appears that there is hardly a historic truth, principle, or standard, given us as a people, which we have not gutted. Talk about the “patience of the saints,” how much further shall we try the patience of God?

To see where the trail ends, we need only ask ourselves What does the Spirit of Prophecy say about “Babylon” and those who will receive the “mark of the beast”?

Checking into the matter, we find that a crucial issue is Sunday morning worship services. Do not underestimate this; it is important. When any of our people begin worshiping God on Sun-

DATE OF PUBLICATION: MARCH 2000

What is this *Pacific Union Recorder* article talking about—a church service or an evangelistic effort? The article says it is an evangelistic effort.

But four facts loudly declare that it is a new type of Sunday morning worship service:

First, in the bold title, the *Recorder* calls it an “Adventist Sunday Church.”

Second, the subtitle states “*Reaching the Unchurched in Las Vegas*”; that is, providing a church for the unchurched.

Third, the name of the place has a churchy

name: “*Higher Ground Community Church*”;—so it will be thought to be a non-denominational community church.

Fourth, the advertising flyers, mailed out by the thousands, refer to it as a church. “*Is this your idea of church?*” “*It’s for people who have given up on the traditional church.*”

Fifth, it is an ongoing church meeting, month after month, for at least a year in duration.

—We urgently need to discuss this matter of Adventist Sunday worship services.

day morning, the people doing it have clearly identified themselves with the beast power. (See the references at the end of this study.)

Someone will say that the Spirit of Prophecy speaks in favor of holding meetings on Sunday. Yes, but those meetings are clearly evangelistic meetings, not worship services. There is a big difference. And, historically, we have held our Sunday evangelistic meetings on Sunday night, not Sunday morning. —**and we do not give the audience the impression that they are Sunday church services!**

We are told that it is all right to go out and pass out papers, look for Bible study interests, give Bible studies, and hold evangelistic meetings on Sunday. —**But we are not to hold worship services on Sunday, never!** Not once are we told in the Spirit of Prophecy that we should even hold branch “Sabbath” schools on Sunday. Nothing giving the appearance of a worship service is to be held by our people on Sunday.

While we are on this, it should be mentioned that we are also told that we are not to regularly attend Sunday church services in Protestant churches. Someone may attend a service once with a friend, in order to get him to attend ours on Sabbath. But we are distinctly told not to regularly attend Sunday worship services. This is not to be done.

This point is one of the very, very few which is in the 1884 edition of *Great Controversy*, and not in the later editions. The reason it was omitted in the later ones is that, like the Satan monologue at the front of the *Snares* chapter, it dealt with an issue of concern to Advent believers. The 1888 edition was written for the world; whereas the 1884 was for our own people. Both editions are fully inspired (as is the 1911 revision), but different purposes were fulfilled in their writing.

Here is the statement, taken directly from our 1884 edition of *Great Controversy*, page 155:

“In the seventeenth century there were several Sabbatarian churches in England, while there were hundreds of Sabbath-keepers scattered throughout the country. **Through their labors this truth was planted in America at an early date.** Less than half a century after the landing of the pilgrims at Plymouth, the Sabbath-keepers of London sent one of their number to raise the standard of Sabbath reform in the new world. This missionary held that the ten commandments as they were delivered from Mount Sinai are moral and immutable, and that it was the antichristian power which thought to change times and laws, that had changed the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day. In Newport, R.I., several church-members embraced these views, yet continued for some years in the church with which they had previously been connected. Finally there arose diffi-

culty between the Sabbatarians and the Sunday observers, and the former were compelled to withdraw from the church, that they might peaceably keep God’s holy day. Soon after, they entered into an organization, thus forming the first Sabbath-keeping church in America. **These Sabbath-keepers had flattered themselves that they could obey the fourth commandment and yet remain connected with Sunday observers.** It was a blessing to them and to after-generations that such a union could not exist; for had it continued, it would eventually have caused the light of God’s holy Sabbath to go out in darkness.

“Some years later, a church was formed in New Jersey. A zealous observer of Sunday, having reproved a person for laboring on that day, was asked for his authority from the Scriptures. On searching for this he found, instead, the divine command for keeping the seventh day, and he began at once to observe it. Through his labors a Sabbatarian church was raised up.”

Do you see? **If the Sabbathkeepers in the early American colonies had continued to attend church on Sunday morning,—they would soon have abandoned the Sabbath truth entirely! We are not to honor the “child of the papacy.” To do so is to prepare ourselves to receive the mark of the beast.**

Someone will say, “Oh, it is all right; for even though we hold worship services on Sunday, we still believe in the Sabbath truth.” But where is the mark placed? “In their right hand, or in their foreheads” (Revelation 13:16). **If you regularly worship on Sunday, you will receive the mark when it is applied, whether or not you mentally believe in Sundaykeeping.**

I have waited for years to see if our people would begin holding worship services on Sunday morning. Others also realize the significance of the act. Friends have inquired of me whether it has started yet.

Well, a variant of it is now beginning. Does this mean that the entire denomination is doing it? No, it does not. But this is still a very significant step downward! Do not underestimate its importance! Indeed, what is more? Our largest union paper boldly published and praised the fact that one of our local congregations is doing it! This adds greatly to the significance! Some of our high-placed church leaders do not see anything wrong with our holding Sunday morning worship services!

I have tried to figure out what is it that we are specifically NOT to do when the National Sunday Law is enacted! We are advised not to work openly. We are advised to use the day to do door-to-door missionary work.

But there is one special prohibition: We are not

to attend Sunday morning worship services! Read the Spirit of Prophecy writings. Locate everything you can on the subject. **It is attendance at Sunday morning worship services which—when the mark is applied—will place it on men and women.**

Will Seventh-day Adventists who have so little regard about the matter—that they now attend such services, encourage other Advent believers to do so, and try to get non-Adventists to come to them—be likely to later receive the mark? Of course they will, when the “threat of imprisonment and death” is made, requiring that attendance; they will quickly capitulate. Sunday worship services is a matter which they are already in accord with. For those who may not be clear on this point: The mark of the beast will not begin to be applied to Sunday worshipers until the U.S. National Sunday Law is enacted, and the worshipers understand the issues involved (7 Bible Commentary, 976-980).

This Pacific Union Recorder article is extremely significant—and in nine ways:

- We are told of at least one local Adventist congregation which is now beginning to hold Sunday morning worship services.
- We are told that **it is being done at Andrews University, to train our young ministers to do it when they go out into the field.**
- We are told that it is a good thing to do, since **other churches in Las Vegas are also doing it.**
- **Adventists are inviting non-Adventists to attend their Sunday services(!),** thinking that is a good thing to do. What a way to “teach the truth”!
- **Our largest union paper has published an article on it, praising the activity and recommending it to other local congregations in Pacific Union Conference territory (seven conferences in five states, plus several western Pacific islands)** as something good for them to also begin doing.
- **This Sundaykeeping congregation has repudiated the name, “Seventh-day Adventist.”** On their church sign, they call themselves the “Higher Ground Community Church.”
- They declare that attending regular church services is like “a sentence to prison.”
- **They divide the worship service between a song service with drums and mike-amplified guitars, followed by a sermon.**
- **This strange “Adventist Sunday Church” is another sampler of the “church planting program,”** which our North American Division is urg-

ing our people to conduct in every conference in America. The credo of that “planting program” is “anything goes,” as long as it brings outsiders into our churches. We live at a time when far too much is going: our standards, beliefs, and even the Bible Sabbath. (See our book, *The Truth about Church Planting*, 44 pp. 8½ x 11, \$3.50 + \$1.50.)

We have here an apostate time, an apostate name, and an apostate program. Yes, hold evangelistic meetings on Sunday, but do not call them church services. **Here are several Spirit of Prophecy passages to look up with your family or group. Do you want to become knowledgeable about this matter, regarding Sunday observance? We are told:**

- It is a virtual recognition of the fundamental principles of Romanism (5 Testimonies 712).
- The papacy will receive honor in the homage paid in doing it (Great Controversy, 579).
- Revelation 13:11-16 will be fulfilled by it (GC 578-579).
- It will be the worship of the beast and his image (Great Controversy, 449).
- Its enforcement [by a Sunday Law] will be a sign that the end is near, and that God’s forbearance has been reached (5 Testimonies, 451).
- It is a plain contradiction of God’s law, for those who do it after light has come (6 Testimonies, 193).
- It is a homage paid to Rome (Great Controversy, 449).
- For those who do so, knowing they should not do so, it is idolatry (Fundamentals of Education, 287).
- It is a recognition of the cornerstone principles of Romanism (5 Testimonies 712).
- It is the mark of the authority of Rome (Evangelism, 234).
- It honors the pope above God (Great Controversy, 449).
- It is the Mark of the Beast (7 Bible Commentary, 976-980; Evangelism 234-235; Great Controversy, 449; 8 Testimonies 117; Testimonies to Ministers, 133).
- It is allegiance to a power opposed to God (Great Controversy, 605).
- It is the worship of the beast and his image (Testimonies to Ministers, 133).
- It is an act of homage to the papacy (Story of Redemption, 383).
- Men in responsible positions will urge it upon the people (Christian Service, 155).