

Life in Southern California ³

When our people cast aside obedience to the law of God, they gradually, unconsciously head downward. Apart from the continual grace of Christ, no one is safe from apostasy and sin. When men and women imagine that they are too sophisticated and “modern” to bother with humble obedience and trust in Christ, His enabling grace is removed and they become a plaything of Satan. The following incidents have all occurred in southern California in the past few years.

Some of the developments have gotten so out of hand that one conference president had to be replaced. But the ongoing standard-and-belief crisis continues.

There is the pastor of one of the most famous of our modernist churches in that area. He began to have a secret affair with a woman pastor of another church. Eventually, the conference quietly discharged both. Both left their spouses and married; and he is now pastoring a Unitarian/Universalist church.

Steve Daily is a leading modernist writer in the Southeastern Conference. Several years ago, he authored a book which urged extremely liberal sentiments. As chaplain at La Sierra University for years, he was in the center of the action there.

But, amazingly so, he has recently been asked to resign. The reason: He began urging the LSU faculty to stop promoting books and teachings which downgrade the very basics of Christianity! Now that Steve has become too conservative for LSU, the situation has really become serious.

Daily is now the new pastor at the Celebration Center Church. But, as we have reported earlier, Celebration Center Church is on the cutting edge, when it comes to experimenting with every modernist, Pentecostal style of worship. They should call it the Wayout Church. Adventists who attend it return to their home churches dissatisfied with the simple worship of God.

The Celebration Center (which, you will recall, was founded by Dan Simpson about fifteen years ago) hardly resembles a church. Here is their description of it:

“We provide a live, contemporary worship in a cafe-style setting around optional tables or in pews, a coffee and donut bar, friendly people to make you feel welcome, inspiring drama presentations, creative children and youth ministries, educational and supportive group ministries, and relevant sermons designed to help you find purpose in your life. As a Bible-believing church, we reach out to our community with the love of Christ.”—*Celebration Cen-*

ter Announcement, April 2, 2005.

Their church activities for Friday, April 8, included the following:

“Worship Dance Instruction 5:15 p.m. / Healing for the Angry Heart 6:00 p.m. / Friday night supper 6:00 p.m. / Celebrate Recovery Groups 7:00 p.m.”

Surely, it cannot be that this is “dance instruction” in a conference-owned Adventist church? Here is how the announcement describes it:

“Worship Dance Instruction Sat, Feb 26. From 5:15 p.m. until 6:45 p.m., Celebration Center. Are you age 12 or older? Do you feel called to minister as a dancer for the Lord? Skill has nothing to do with the call—it’s a matter of the heart. Join us on Tuesdays at 5:15 p.m. Each 3rd Tuesday is open to everyone for scriptural study on dance, flags and banners and closing with expressive worship or a simple choreographed movement. For more information contact: Cindy Rowe & Kathy Mose. Call Cindy 951-751-6653.”

Apparently this is a practice session for church members, so they can dance in front of the church members on Sabbath morning. Notice that they practice dancing during the Sabbath hours for an hour and a half every Sabbath afternoon.

The leaders know that the opportunity to watch swaying, whirling, dancing men and women will help attract larger crowds of Adventists from area churches. It will also help corrupt their personal standards.

The “dance instruction” classes are held on Fridays, 5:15-6:45 p.m.; Sabbath afternoon from 5:15-6:45 p.m.; and Tuesdays, starting at 7 p.m.—all in the main worship auditorium.

“Worship Dance Instruction: Age 12 and older. 7:00 p.m. Celebrate Life: Auditorium.”

The “Angry Heart” class consists of watching dramatic videos for two and a half months.

“Healing for the Angry Heart Sat, Feb 26, Celebration Center. You are invited to join this new 10-week video study group which meets each Monday at 6:00 p.m. For more information contact: Anne and Sabrina Haddad. Call 909-796-3510.”

Then there is the Friday night “Life in the Spirit” classes. It includes a supper which you can pay for while you are there.

Friday Night Supper Fri, Apr 16. 6:00 p.m. Celebration Center. Come for fellowship and supper at 6:00 p.m. and stay for “Life in the Spirit,” to learn techniques to improve and enhance your Bible study. Supper donations requested: Adults \$3.00, children 1-10 \$1.00. At 7:00 p.m. on March 25 an Easter Communion service will be held. For more information contact: Church Office (909) 796-3510.”

4 The list of activities for Sabbath is lengthy. Since people will need energy to get through it, the first item on the Sabbath events list is “Coffee Shop Opens 9:30 a.m.” This way, you can grab another cup of coffee every so often to keep you going. Moderns need lots of coffee.

The latest trend in that church is encouraging “the manifestations of the spirit.” I can assure you that, ere long, they will have lots of the spirit—both in their church and in their homes. It is a dangerous thing to tinker with satanic spirit manifestations, disguised though they may be under Christian terminology. One of the leaders there claims that they are trying to let the Holy Spirit take charge of the worship services and do whatever He wants. But, since they are already a celebration-type church, the spirit they will eventually invite in will be a very unpleasant one.

Pastor Daily’s sermon title for that particular week was “The Wonder-full World of Worship.” Very appropriate topic for a sermon for the people who preceded it by singing with the band, watching theatrical skits and dancing women, and engaging in Pentecostal-type praying.

This particular weekly church announcement did not mention the ballroom dancing.

I have been asked why the celebrationists call their worship services “celebration services”? The answer is simple enough: They have been taught that the law has been done away, they were saved at the cross, and now all they need do is celebrate! For, regardless of their present conduct, they cannot be lost.

Free from the law, oh, happy condition. Let’s enjoy ourselves; for we’re bound for perdition.

Not far away is one of our radio stations (KSGN in Riverside) which reaches San Bernardino, Loma Linda, and La Sierra. There was a time when it was more conservative; but the situation changed, when people connected with the California Baptist College were invited to help plan and produce the broadcasts. The KSGN manager put a non-Adventist on the board of directors in order to give the station “perspective” and make it more attractive to those not of our faith. But soon the station was no longer presenting anything of our faith, except a couple of church services on Sabbath.

One of their announcement sheets makes this comment about the music they prefer:

“Modern rock, rap/hip hop, pop/contemporary, inspirational, urban, southern gospel, bluegrass, country, praise and worship and more.”

Their “Events” list for April lists 78 activities, apparently none of which are Adventist.

Then there is the Tierrasanta Church in the San Diego area. The word means “holy ground.” At the initial groundbreaking ceremony, a Catholic priest was present to help dedicate the new church.

According to their church announcement:

“The Tierrasanta Seventh-day Adventist Church is unique because it provides a place of worship, spiritual exploration, and caring for people with a great need for personal spiritual integrity, with a minimal need for orthodoxy and dogmatism. We invite you to “come as you are” and move toward a more fulfilling relationship with your personal God.”

That well-describes what you will find at this church. It recently featured the study of the book, *A Walk with Four Spiritual Guides*. The book is about Andrew Harvey’s very personal introduction to Krishna’s lessons on the immortality of the soul, Buddha’s description of the fundamental role of mental conditioning in making us who we are, Jesus’ Kingdom of God as something we have right now in our secular world, and Ramakrishna’s teachings on the truth of all religions. The teachings of each “guide” is quoted, along with commentaries by world-religion “experts.” The whole thing is about the deep “wisdom” you can get from paganism.

Tierrasanta Church hosts monthly Adventist Forum Meetings, at which Loma Linda and La Sierra personnel provide speculative lectures on the most unorthodox topics imaginable. Because it would be embarrassing for those schools to host such public, non-Adventist lectures on their own campuses, they have arranged for the meetings to be held in San Diego at Tierrasanta. Many drive down on Sabbath afternoons to hear the latest theories.

There seems to be a satanic infatuation with anything and everything that violates our beliefs and standards. But this leads to an increasing compulsion to indulge in sin.

One church was shaken up a couple years ago when a leader stole \$200,000 from the church and fled to Arizona. Then there are the two teachers at one of our two universities there; each was fired for doing very bad things. Both left and are now pastors of non-Adventist churches. For an annual Easter Passion Play, an open homosexual was asked to portray Jesus. He has since appeared in a gay film. A music teacher left his wife for a man. On and on it goes.

Each one of us must cling to Jesus as His humble, obedient children and be submissive to the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy writings—lest we fall as so many others have. —*uf*