

A Church Without Walls

Avalon Wellness Center has expanded its horizons and co-created a new ministry. We now offer services through the Avalon Church. We are a church without walls.

Historical records indicate that it probably was two and one half centuries after the time that Jesus spent on earth that a building was set aside especially for Christian worship. This made Christianity very different from other religions. Jews met in synagogues and pagan cults also had permanent worship sites, but; Christians did not.

So where did the followers of Jesus meet? One reference in the New Testament – Philemon 2, suggests that the homes of Jesus’ followers were their meeting places. “To Philemon our beloved friend and fellow laborer, to the beloved Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church in your house”. In fact the building in Dura, unexpectedly found in Syria by archeologists working in the area, was a house that had been remodeled to make it suitable for worship.

It is believed, the more affluent persons connected with the church provided these homes because poorer members would not have been in a position to do so. Even in the largest homes, space might have limited attendance. This could have resulted in a single community having several locations where Christians came together.

The concept of the “house church” has never fully disappeared from Christian imaginations. Following the Second World War, there were a number of ministers and congregations in the United States who opted for such arrangements, including one enterprising young pastor, Robert Schuller, in Orange County, California. He held church services in a drive-in theater for a number of years. Following these humble yet fruitful beginnings, this church without walls evolved into the Garden Grove Community Church in 1955, later becoming the Crystal Cathedral in 1980. Dr. Schuller was strongly influenced by his mentor, Norman Vincent Peale and has focused his teachings on the positive aspects of Christianity. Rather than concentrating on condemning people for sin, Christians and non-Christians alike are encouraged to achieve great things through a loving God, uplifting theology, and positive thinking.

The teachings which followers of Jesus called “The Way” include compassion, gratitude, love, forgiveness, grace, and joy. These are the cornerstones of the Avalon Church. Following the examples of great spiritual teachers like Dr. Schuller, Troward, Fox, and other followers of Christ, Pastor Jody Pries offers his services in outreach to those who are seekers. Pastor Jody is available for guest pastor speaking and pastoral services. Beginning in September 2008, he will be teaching classes in Bible mystery and Bible meaning. We look forward to these presentations, and we are grateful for any support you might be willing to provide to the Avalon Church.