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The hard way



Dean Andrews: 'I was a person reaching out'

Dean Andrews, Westminster resident and member of the Pentecostal Church, will share his experiences during a 7 p.m. youth service Sunday at Cypress Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 4321 Cerritos Ave. —The Editor

Dope dealer. Hare Krishna devotee. Astrologer. Impoverished transient. Dabbler in the supernatural. Seeker.

A lot of dusty highways brought Dean Andrews to where he is today. They led from Virginia to Texas, from Idaho to Oregon, from Hawaii to Southern California, in the incredible journey of a man who wanted to find his own answers.

"I was a person reaching out," he says simply. Fair-haired and irrepressible, Dean looks much younger than his 30 years. His candid face reveals scant trace of the ravages that searching brought him. But they are inside him nonetheless, and he doesn't want to forget the wrong turns that he made.

Dean compares his former self to the storybook donkey who had a carrot dangling in front of his nose. The faster the donkey ran, the more directions in which he turned, the more the carrot eluded him.

With Dean, the seductive lure was God. He thought that he could reach God by injecting LSD into his blood system; or maybe through studying stellar formations; or perhaps by emulating mystics like Edgar Cayce.

He was in Virginia poring over the works of Cayce nearly five years ago when he stopped to pick up a bizarre-looking hitchhiker with the shaven head and shapeless garments of a Hare Krishna devotee.

Dean immediately sensed a "supernatural" presence about the man, could "feel vibrations going through my body." Believing that the stranger was "really free from this planet," Dean found

He first looked for God with LSD, Hare Krishna

himself impressed by his "separateness."
"He was a challenge to me," Dean explains now; "A challenge of separateness." The devotee challenged Dean to join him in the life of Hare Krishna, but the enthralled young man knew he was not yet ready to surrender.

The devotee did leave Dean with a token of his existence—a Krishna chant. "I began chanting," says Dean, "and things began to happen in my head, in my life. Through submission, I allowed that spirit into my body."

From that point on, Dean knew it was just a matter of time. He came back to California and gathered up

travelling outreach. He and five other men were provided with a van filled with books and literature to distribute through Texas and Oklahoma. Given no money, they had to beg gasoline, tires and food to keep the project operating.

While at the temple, however, Dean kept to a strict routine of worship, chanting, chores and the street work in which devotees sang, danced and distributed literature. He always carried a bag in which his chanting beads were kept, and he was required to chant one time for each of the 108 beads 16 times daily.

Dean enjoyed the dancing, the identification with

because of the starchy, low-protein diet demanded for the devotees. Their health was undermined further by temple routine, which allowed them only four or five hours of sleep each night.

Temple leaders told Dean the children merely were experiencing "spiritual shock" and that he should not worry about it. But Dean could not reconcile himself to the temple pressure to ignore his children. "They would come to me for warmth and security," he recounts painfully, "and I was forced to reject them."

So Dean surreptitiously called his sister and brother-in-law to arrange plans for his escape. He gathered what he could of his children's belongings and his own and slipped out during Sunday afternoon visiting hours.

"It was a great relief and joy for us to be together," Dean reveals, but his little girl was "shocked out and dazed" by the experience. He also was finding it difficult to cope—branded by his shaved head he was regarded as a freak and unable to find work.

And so the wandering began again—to Idaho and on to Oregon. He had not rejected the basic philosophies of Hare Krishna and he continued to chant, adhering to his meatless diet, but still felt restless and unfulfilled.

In 1973, Dean found himself at the door of a Christian commune in Hawaii.

He was broke and hungry, hoping to pass as a Christian long enough to get a few days of free lodging.

"Man, what you need is to get saved," the commune leader told Dean. "You need to get aside 1 Ching, tarot, numerology, divination, chanting—give up every form of religious philosophy."

"For me to deny them,"

admits Dean, "was like laying down my brains. They said that Jesus will tell me everything I know." Although he thought he was "just changing gurus," Dean says, he "knew it was a cosmic moment in my life."

Afterwards, Dean remembers, "I made a confession and renounced everything, but I didn't feel a thing. I felt as if I had cut my heart out, surrendered everything I knew, and nothing had happened."

Then a man laid his hands on Dean's head and, addressing the negative influences in his soul, said, "I cast you out of this vessel of God in the name of Jesus Christ!"

Dean recalls that he was sitting cross-legged on the floor. He says he suddenly felt "a tingling, an uplifting sensation. My breath was caught, my head snapped back and my arms went up in the air. I knew I had crossed through to the other side."

Afterwards, Dean went outside, feeling "like a vacuum being filled with the knowledge of God. I felt as if someone had taken the gauze from my eyes."

Dean feels absolutely certain that Christianity is the end of the road, not just another step, in his search for God. Except for the hurt his children experienced, Dean regrets nothing of his past because he knew it was "something I had to do."

His present is full of silversmithing and friends and feeling good about himself. Although he still can understand and respect the people who are searching the way he once was, Dean feels sure now that the way he has chosen is the best way of all.

"Before, I was dead," he explains tranquilly, "but now I'm alive."

"The search is over."

—Pamela Burdick

'I told them about my unbelief ... I was having trouble holding on'

his two children—a 5-year-boy, and 4-year-girl—and took them to Dallas. There, he surrendered his children and himself to the Hare Krishna temple.

At that time, Dean says, he was convinced that his actions were necessary for his children's "spiritual purification." Hare Krishna devotees say that they "had to devote themselves to the service of God for their own good." Dean chose the Dallas temple because it places special emphasis on the teaching of children.

When the family surrendered, recalls Dean, the little boy's head was shaved and the little girl was assigned a guardian. "It was just a miracle that we weren't separated," he says thankfully, because devotees believe that families should be divided to achieve fuller devotion to God.

As it was, there was no other temple where Dean could be sent at that time, so he remained in Dallas but was separated as much as possible from his children.

Dean was chosen to be a part of the temple's

other devotees, the "strangeness of it." But he didn't like the "loss" of contact from the outside world, the strict regulations, the gradual dulling of his mind and senses through constant chanting.

"I tried," he reveals earnestly; "I got head first into it, but I came across this invisible wall. I had reasoned this whole thing to be the truth, so I thought I was a doomed man."

Devotees told Dean that leaving the temple would be "spiritual suicide," that his next incarnation would be miserable because he would have failed in this karma.

"I told them about my unbelief," he says now, "I told them I was having trouble holding on." But the only help the leaders could offer him was more time to read, and he could draw no reassurance from the abstract, wordy books that expounded the Hare Krishna philosophy.

And Dean began to worry about his children. They constantly were suffering from colds and illnesses

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Ex-Cultist Speaks at Holy Cross

Dean Andrews, ex-devotee of the Hare Krishna religious cult will share his cult experience with friends and members of the Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 4321 Cerritos Ave., Cypress. He will speak during the Youth Service held at 7 p.m. on May 30. The public is invited to attend.

Andrews will discuss the mystique of the neo-cults and the deceptions which make them so powerful today. A brief question and answer period will follow.

Holy Cross Lutheran Church is currently completing plans for a Youth Activities Center on the grounds, to enhance the existing Youth and Sunday School program.

Pastor Elmer Thyer conducts a contemporary church service each Sunday morning at 9 a.m. The traditional Lutheran service follows at 10:30.