

Sign of the times

San Francisco birthday party features live sex acts, attracts mayor, top officials

Editor's Note: R. Albert Mohler Jr., 37, is president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

By R. ALBERT MOHLER JR.
Special to The Voice-Tribune

The City by the Bay is at it again. These days, moral outrage does not come naturally to San Francisco. The Bay Area, famous as the "playpen of counter cultures," does not often get worked up about a sexual scandal. After all, in San Francisco, it's hard to create a sexual scandal.

Nevertheless, a scandal is exactly what San Franciscans have on their hands. It all started with a birthday party honoring Jack Davis, one of the most powerful political operatives in a very political city. The invitation to the party promised "Food! Live Music! Debauchery!" and asked invitees to "Celebrate a Half Century of Hedonism." Well, they can't say they weren't warned.

Live sex acts

The 300 people who attended the revelry were treated to live sex acts — heterosexual and homosexual — and to other demonstrations of orgiastic hedonism. Inflatable sex objects bobbed around the room as male, female and "transgendered" dancers performed in the smoke of a fog machine.

As Davis himself admitted, "There were some activities on stage that many persons found shocking." *Shocking?* The centerpiece of the evening was a sado-masochistic "blood and urine" show in which a priest of the Church of Satan had a satanic pentagram carved into his back. As the blood flowed, his leather-clad female assistant urinated on his back. What came next cannot be repeated here.

Are you shocked yet?

The mayor was there

This brief and carefully edited glimpse into the party should be more than sufficient to evoke moral outrage. But the story is far larger, for the party was attended by several of San Fran-

cisco's most powerful politicians including Mayor Willie Brown, District Attorney Terence Hallinan, Sheriff Michael Hennessey and assorted state legislators and city supervisors, as well as the president of the Board of Supervisors. According to The San Francisco Chronicle, the event was attended by "about half of Mayor Willie Brown's top staff," as well as top executives of the 49ers football team and the Giants baseball franchise. The mayor, the story explained, "left for another engagement before things got crazy."

In the aftermath, Sheriff Hennessey had the best lines: "It was like walking into a (Robert) Mapplethorpe exhibit. It was so disgusting, I thought it was funded by the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts)." Disgusting, said the sheriff, yet no arrests were made. The sheriff and the district attorney were present as participant party-goers, not as law enforcement.

Given the publicity, Davis offered an apology for a "party that got out of hand." But don't take that at face value. Davis also asserted, "Most people said it was the best party they'd ever been to. And it wasn't anything compared to the after-party at my house." We can just imagine.

Den of debauchery

What would attract so many of San Francisco's power elite to such a den of debauchery? Davis is one of the most feared and powerful political figures in the city. He is credited with putting Brown and his predecessor, Frank Jordan, into the mayoral office. He is the consummate Bay area deal-maker and the power behind more than one political throne. He was also the political engineer for the Giants' successful drive for a new stadium — which brings us to his current client, the 49ers. The football team wants \$100 million in lease-revenue bonds for a new stadium and "mega-mall" at Candlestick Point. Davis is the 49ers' campaign manager for the June ballot measure.

That explains — at least in theory — why 49ers' president Car-

men Policy was in attendance at the infamous birthday bash. Given the controversy over the party, Davis offered to resign as campaign manager, but the 49ers' brass would not think of accepting his resignation. John Whitehurst, a San Francisco political consultant, explained it this way: "In our business, winning overshadows everything."

Even The San Francisco Chronicle voiced revulsion, calling the party "degrading and disgusting." In an editorial statement, the paper registered concern over the presence of a "who's who" of elected officials at the hedonistic celebration. The statement continued: "Their presence — and the prevailing silence about the lewdness they witnessed — is an unsettling commentary about the state of San Francisco politics. Tolerance is a virtue, and a trademark of this city, but it need not be limitless."

Just bad taste?

Football executive Carmen Policy was not so concerned. "It was not our party — we went as guests along with several hundred other people," he explained. "I think some outrageous friends (of Davis) tried to do some outrageous things. ... We simply view it as an example of bad taste." Bad taste? The 49ers have billed themselves as a family value asset to the San Francisco metropolis. The values on stage at the Davis event reveal a very sick family.

Why should anyone outside San Francisco care about this affair? After all, what have we come to expect out of the Bay Area's culture, which flaunts sexual immorality, celebrates homosexuality, and endorses the almost limitless variants of human sexuality?

Culture has lost its soul

A culture is known by its celebrations. The bacchanalian birthday bash in San Francisco represents far more than an isolated event. Like the Roman Emperor Caligula's orgies, Davis' party is a picture of a culture that has lost its soul. Declaring himself a god, Caligula indulged in sex with both men and women — and with his sisters, and threw parties at which Davis and company would have felt right at home. The self-declared gods of San Francisco are following in Caligula's immoral footsteps.

Destruction from within

Looking at the fall of Rome, historian Will Durant commented, "A great civilization is not conquered from without until it has destroyed itself within." The most fundamental destruction behind Rome's fall was moral, and the same is now true for Western civilization in general — and America in particular.

We tolerate what others celebrate, and eventually celebrate what we tolerate. The editors of The San Francisco Chronicle missed the point. Tolerance has its limits, they say, even as they admit that tolerance is one of the city's proud trademarks. The problem is that the San Francisco culture rejects any fixed or objective morality, much less biblical morality. Indeed the city's culture has celebrated and emulated Sodom. Thus, any "limits" on the

city's moral tolerance are merely arbitrary and will not last. Davis' party is just one more crack in a crumbling foundation.

The moral collapse of a civilization does not come as a singular event, but as a series of little compromises and moral adjustments a society makes over a period of years — or even decades. The debauchery in San Francisco — attended by the luminaries of the city — is just one more reminder that we are not at the starting gate of moral decline, but well on our way to moral destruction.

The only way to recovery is submission to biblical morality. God will not be mocked, and this culture will reap what it sows, what it tolerates and what it celebrates. In other words, the party's over.