

## **Car & Motorcycle Giveaway at "Church" - What Will Be Next?**

The *Houston Chronicle* recently reported the Abundant Life Christian Center in Galveston County gave away a new PT Cruiser and Harley-Davidson Sportster on New Year's Eve. Since Nov. 30, church members were allowed to enter the drawing each time they attended (twice if they brought a visitor). The church "pastor" said he did not see anything wrong with the contest. He said, "It is just an incentive to help people come that special night," and, "The church is...really excited about the possibility of someone coming and hearing the good news of Jesus, and if they win a car in the process, that is just another part of the blessing." The church is also the first one in La Marque to open a Starbucks [coffee] outlet.

Does this strike you as odd? If so, read on. If not, you especially need to read on.

Using the bait of a car and motorcycle to get people to attend church is purely a carnal tactic (cf. Rom. 8:6). Such "incentives" will draw people in--materialistic, earthly-minded people (Matt. 6:19-21; Col. 3:1-2). This reveals a lack of faith on the part of the "pastor" and others.

The Bible teaches the crucified Christ is what/who is to entice men (1 Cor. 1:18-29). Jesus said men are to be drawn to Him when they are "taught" and learn (Jn. 6:44, 45; cf. Rom. 1:16). However, the "Abundant Life" church, and many others, seem to think a loving, sacrificial Savior who promises a crown of life, is not enough to draw men in. They lack faith in the power of the gospel of Christ to penetrate the hearts of men (cf. Heb. 4:12; Acts 2:37). Despite their protests to the contrary, their faith is in worldly strategies and material objects.

Several decades back, some churches offered food and fun for those attending services. Plays and other forms of entertainment were also incorporated in "evangelistic" efforts. A few years ago, a church in the Northeast paid people \$10 to attend services. Now, churches are offering new cars and motorcycles. What's next? Will there be a church that offers a college scholarship? Will there be a drawing for a new house? What about offering exotic vacations? A church can get a deal on this because of the drop in tourism over the past few years. It may even be free to a church as a promotional tool for the airlines, hotels, and resorts.

We wonder, will liberal churches of Christ--that believe food and recreation are a legitimate work of the church--reject contests to give away cars and motorcycles? If not, why not? Perhaps they will object to the "contest" aspect. Then why not just give a car or motorcycle to all who attend, like food and recreation are offered to all?

Those who use and are attracted by such carnal means are destined for hell. Satan tries to disguise such things as "innovative" and "ingenius." Let us not be fooled by his wiley actions (Eph. 6:10-12). Rather, let us put our faith in the Word and His word (Jn. 1:1; Rom. 1:16).

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