

Texas Church Attracts Followers With Beer

A Texas church is trying something different to attract new congregates. A pub in Fort Worth is home to the Church-in-a-Pub, where members of the Calvary Lutheran Church meet for services and grab a pint at the same time. Calvary Lutheran Church "pastor" Phillip Heinze explained how the idea first came about. "We we're looking for a place off site to hold a worship service ... and this place opened up called Zio Carlo [Magnolia] Brew Pub ... they weren't opened on Sunday ... it's a great space ... they allowed us to come and use it as a worship space."

The pub serves beer, but there are other options for members. "They serve pizza and have craft beer; they have iced tea, water, and soft drinks." Heinze added, "It's a way of reaching out in the neighborhood and just getting outside our four walls ... we're not trying to attract new members per se, what we're really into doing is connecting church people with non-church people."

The congregation meets at the pub every Sunday evening. The Sunday service allows their preacher to make connections with local musicians which he says was an unexpected benefit. "We have local singer-songwriters that come and play their own music; it doesn't have to be Christian music ... so we've connected with this whole community of singer-songwriters who are also folks who don't necessarily come into churches," said Heinze.

Heinze says the disciples described in the Bible inspired him to go out in the community: "The gospel has always been meant to be proclaimed in public spaces ... the disciples went into the marketplaces ... in a sense we are just doing what the first century did ... finding ways to communicate with others."

Heinze shared that there is one financial benefit to having mass at a pub. "We do a get a happy hour rate on beer ... it's kinda nice." "We've actually had three baptisms in the bar ... so that's been really interesting too," said Heinze.

Is it not amazing that people can justify virtually anything? Paul wrote in Romans 3:8, "And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just." In attempting to grow their numbers, they are tempting people with one of the most-condemned sins in the Bible. Proverbs 20:1 says, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." The Bible gives incontrovertible evidence that drunkenness is sinful (Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:18; Luke 21:34; Romans 13:13; 1

Thessalonians 5:7-8). Furthermore, Peter wrote, "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries ..." (1 Peter 4:3). In this verse, he condemns three levels of drinking: drunkenness, revelries (our "happy hour"), and drinking parties (social drinking).

It is unconscionable that people who claim to be religious would openly tolerate and even encourage what God has specifically condemned. You cannot drink alcohol without it eventually having a negative effect on you, as well as others. In fact, Peter is addressing influence in 1 Peter 4! None of us live in a vacuum. Our lives and actions influence others. Drinking is ungodly and no amount of "good works" invented by man and sold to the unstudied public can change its condemnation by God.

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