

We have begun a series of messages with the following theme; "Contemporary Issues". This message was prompted by an article which I read in O Timothy magazine, Volume 26-Issue 3-March, 2009. The article was a review of the Emerging Church movement which is gathering momentum around the world. In particular there were some comments from the Pastor of Mars Hill Church in Seattle, Mark Driscoll, which highlight the need for us to address the Contemporary Issues which we all face. The following is taken from the article:-

" 'Driscoll says, Restrictive Christians go too far and name everything a universal sin, forbidding some culture activities that the Bible does not, such as listening to certain musical styles, getting tattoos, watching movies, smoking cigarettes, consuming alcohol, and body piercing' (The Radical Reformation, p103).

Mark Driscoll's church sets up a "champagne bar" at its New Year's Eve dance parties.

Mars Hill has "beer-brewing lessons"... "

The first Issue we are to look at is '***Should Christians Drink Alcohol?***'

I will open with this statement: We as a church maintain that a Christian should maintain total abstinence from the drinking of alcohol.

There are those who try and justify the drinking of alcohol by a Christian by saying that Jesus drank wine (Not found in the Bible!) or that Jesus made wine, referring to the wedding feast at Cana of Galilee. A study of the original Greek word will show that the wine mentioned here needs to be understood in its context, which precludes it from being alcoholic wine of our day. There are different principles which we will look at which will support this.

Firstly, consider the statement that Jesus drank wine at the last supper. The Bible tells us that it was the fruit of the vine which they drank and the Lord Jesus said that He would not drink of it! We know that alcohol is a poison. Would that which was to picture for us the blood of Christ which was soon to be shed as God's sacrificial Lamb for the sins of the world, contain it?

Secondly, if the wine which the Lord Jesus made at the wedding was alcoholic by today's standard then He would have violated the scriptures

(Hab 2:15) - which He could not do- and bought a woe upon Himself.

Thirdly , the Bible tells us to abstain from ALL appearance of evil I Thes 5:22. The word "evil" means that which is harmful or damaging - that describes alcohol.

Fourthly, Most would agree that drunkenness is a sin -Eph 5:18. At what point (BIBLICALLY) is a person drunk or under the influence of alcohol? People who drink tell us that they have one or two glasses to help them relax: where is the peace of God which every believer is supposed to have? - Isa 26:3, Ps 119:165, Phil 4:6,7.

Consider also that the first glass starts to have an effect on the flesh - changes mood feelings, talking etc. Remember that God's Word tell us that we are to make NO provision for the flesh Rom 13:14

Fifthly, a person who is an alcoholic/drunard did not plan to get into that position BUT got there by having the first drink! How can a Christian by either their example or by directly giving alcohol to another individual be a party to that process? God forbids us from being a stumbling block to others - Rom 14:21-23, ICor 8:12,13.

Sixthly, our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor 6:19,20) and we are not to defile God's temple.

Seventhly, am I my brother's keeper? Yes! Why would any Christian want to support in any way an industry which will cause souls to die and go to hell; which brings heartache and suffering to many homes; which costs industry millions of dollars in lost man hours and work injuries; which is an high contributing factor to road accidents etc??

Let me encourage you to also read the following verses in the book of Proverbs 20:1, 21:17, 23:20,21,31-35 . All of these warn against the dangers and folly of alcohol.

I will finish this short study (not exhaustive by along way) by restating an earlier statement:

WE AS A CHURCH MAINTAIN THAT A CHRISTIAN SHOULD MAINTAIN TOTAL ABSTINENCE FROM THE DRINKING OF ALCOHOL