

# The Brown Street Beacon

*"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,*

*holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)*



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## Conforming to the World

Some of the practices that we hear about in the religious world are almost unbelievable. Back in August, Lisa Bills gave me an article from the Akron Beacon Journal entitled, "Prayers Served with a Cold One." The article, written by Emily Tate, begins with these words: *"It's not every day that churchgoers get to break down the Bible with a beer in hand."* The writer then proceeds to describe how a minister in a Lutheran church in Gahanna, began what he termed "Pub Theology." It involved members of his church meeting with people in a pub to discuss the Bible while drinking beer together.

"Pub Theology" probably seems like a good idea to many so-called churchgoers, but what it really demonstrates is a willingness to conform to this world. Winning souls to Christ will almost never succeed when taking that approach. Yes, there might be a deep discussion of the Bible. And yes, the atmosphere may not contain the hostility that sometimes characterizes differences of opinion on doctrinal issues. As one member who attends this "Pub Theology" said, *"It's hard to be polarized in a place like this, with a beer in your hand."* However, are the people at this pub really interested in turning their lives around and serving Jesus Christ, or do they, just like the Athenians in Paul's day, simply like to discuss things. One thing that was glaringly absent in the article under consideration is any mention of anyone turning their lives over to Jesus by obeying the gospel.

This method of trying to reach people for Christ is a demonstration of another aspect of the "social gospel." The social gospel is an appeal to the flesh. It is an attempt to win souls to Christ by tapping into the carnal desires of man, and after satisfying some physical want, introducing the gospel. Oftentimes, as is the case in the method discussed above, the appeal to the flesh involves conforming to the world in one way or another. The "Pub Theology" approach basically says, "the world loves beer, so let's make them comfortable by sharing a beer with them; and then, perhaps, they will listen to the gospel." Lost in the approach is the terrible consequences of drinking beer and other alcoholic beverages and the support of such action. There isn't anything good about the consumption of alcohol. Alcohol is a drug that robs people of their sobriety. Listen to what the *Concise Columbia Encyclopedia* says about alcohol:

"Alcohol is a central nervous system DEPRESSANT that reduces anxiety, inhibition, and feelings of guilt; lowers alertness; impairs perception, judgment, and muscular coordination; and, in high doses, can cause unconsciousness and even death."

So, alcohol is a mind-altering drug. Last I checked God demands that we be sober (1 Peter 1:13; 5:8). But alcohol is not only a drug, it is a drug that kills. Thousands of people die every year due to drinking alcoholic beverages. Also, we should consider that many of the deaths that occur due to the consumption of alcohol involve innocent people who have never taken a drink in their lives. Back in 2010 it was reported that "10,839 people died in alcohol-impaired driving crashes. Drunk driving fatalities accounted for 32% of all traffic deaths, that is, on average someone is killed in an alcohol-impaired driving crash about every 50 minutes in the U.S." (Source: NHTSA/FARS, 2010)."

Is that not a shocking truth? Every 50 minutes someone loses a mother or father, a brother or sister, a son or daughter, due to the consumption of alcohol. Consumption, by the way, that may take place in a local pub somewhere while discussing religious matters.

To drink the kind of beer, and other alcoholic beverages, that can be purchased today, is to consume “strong drink,” something the Bible condemns. It is to engage in worldly behavior. Paul urged Christians to avoid such behavior.

Romans 12:2 (ESV)

2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

“Pub Theology” is not only a bad idea, it demonstrates conformity to the world. As God’s people, we are not to be like the world. Instead, we must “go out from their midst, and be separated from them” (2 Corinthians 6:17).

*Don*

## Brief Exhortation

Compiled by David J. Riggs

“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.” (Col. 3:12-13)

There are areas in our lives where, in our efforts to be right, we may go wrong, so wrong as to lead to spiritual deformity. To be specific, let me name a few:

1. When in our determination to be bold, we become brazen.
  2. When in our desire to be frank, we become rude.
  3. When in our effort to be watchful, we become suspicious.
  4. When we seek to be serious and become somber.
  5. When we mean to be conscientious and become over scrupulous.
- (From A.W. Tozer)

2 Timothy 2:24-25 says, “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth...”

## Quotable Quotes

Be assured that just as an hour is only part of a day, so life on Earth is only part of eternity. ~C.L. Allen

This year, or this month, or, more likely, this very day, we have failed to practice ourselves the kind of behavior we expect from other people. ~C.S. Lewis

That’s the thing about faith. If you don’t have it you can’t understand it. And if you do, no explanation is necessary.~ Major Kira Nerys

Heaven is a city without a cemetery. ~Unknown