

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."



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Jesus and the Emergent Church and Matthew 24:45-51

--By Terry Carter



The Emergent Church Movement is a very diverse group of people, practices, and ideas. Nevertheless, certain practices and attitudes seem to run through the various groups that identify with the larger movement. There are two in particular that I'd like to highlight in this article.

The first one is their negative attitude towards what they might call "the traditional Church" or "the traditional Christian".

There are a number of videos on www.youtube.com that display this attitude. To find them, just search for "I'm a Christ follower". They are a parody of the Mac V's PC commercials from a few years ago.

This negative attitude is not limited to such videos. Wikipedia rightly says that what Emergent Church adherents mostly agree on is, "disillusionment with the organized and institutional church and their support for the deconstruction of modern Christian worship, modern evangelism, and the nature of modern Christian community."

As a result of their antagonism towards "traditional" Christianity, they often write diatribes against them. While they may not resort to actual physical violence, they certainly do beat up on them verbally.

A second practice that is commonly found among Emergent Church groups is their affinity for alcoholic beverages. This often goes beyond individuals indulging in their homes.

Often their services (if you can legitimately call them that) are actually held in taverns. Many of them are very proud of how open-minded they are about such practices. Their admission goes almost to the point of bragging about it. Their leaders often write about how they frequent such places and boast of how many "evangelistic" conversations they have there.

Even some of the churches within the Restoration Movement have adopted these practices. They hold what they are calling "Pub Theology Events".

Of course they explain that their teaching times have expanded from two minutes to five. It seems to me that they are teaching much more loudly by example than any other way and the message is not a Biblical one.

The sad truth is that I personally know of people whose lives have been shattered by alcohol after they were introduced to it, either at a "church service" or while hanging out with people in the church.

Before we get excited about an extra three minutes of teaching time in a bar, maybe we ought to consider what it is costing others. Is there really a net gain for the Kingdom of God or is it a net loss? These people may or may not be drunkards themselves, but they certainly drink unashamedly with the drunkards.

As I considered these two aspects of the Emergent Church, I couldn't help but notice how similar it is to what Jesus described in **Matthew Chapter 24**.

After describing the faithful and wise servant who gives food to his household in due season, He contrasts this with the evil servant who considers the Master's delay in returning.

"45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?"

46 "Blessed [is] that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.

47 "Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.

48 "But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,'

49 "and **begins to beat [his] fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards,**

50 "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for [him] and at an hour that he is not aware of,

51 "and will cut him in two and appoint [him] his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
--**Matthew 24:45-51**

All I can add is that when somebody orally beats up on his fellow servants, and is eating and drinking with drunkards, Jesus says that they are evil servants. As Jesus goes on to proclaim, the end of such a person is not good.

Let's learn the lesson of this parable and be faithful and wise servants.

* See the Christian Standard and the Indianapolis Star for examples of these events.