

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Friends In Low Places

(Jerry Fite)

No, it is not Garth Brooks, but your new friends at the Southern Hills church of Christ in Abilene, Texas. The elders of Southern Hills are overseeing a new church in town called the “Bar Church”. According to Southern Hills’ own web site, church members will be meeting soon at the Memories Country and Western bar on Sunday mornings to place themselves *“in a position to be in relationship with people who: 1) were fed up with church; 2) had dim views of church and especially church people; 3) perceived themselves to be unworthy or far from God.”* A staff member, Van Conwell, in a news paper interview said, *“We are trying to be here in a way that communicates acceptance.”*

Alcohol will be present and available though not served until noon. The church says, *“With Bar Church’s stated mission to meet people where they are, we anticipate that alcohol will most likely be consumed during the meeting of Bar Church.”* What acceptance are you communicating? The church will carefully check ID’s, and use a

system to identify underage patrons *“to insure they are not served alcohol”*. I did not know that attending church could be so dangerous for those under 21.

The church’s video introduces the Bar Church by stating Jesus did not isolate Himself in a castle, nor *“did He set up shop in a temple.”* True, He was not an “isolationist”, but He did preach and teach in the temple (*Lk. 19:47*); and His church did not fear “setting up shop” criticisms, but continued assembling in the temple for worship (*Acts 2:42, 46*).

Jesus did run people out of the temple who were “setting up shop.” Why? Because, they turned the temple which is God’s house of prayer, into a place of merchandise (*John 2:14-16*). They failed to distinguish between the holy and the common.

Is this not what Southern Hills has done in the name of making people feel “acceptance”? People can drink their alcohol while the church has assembled to “soberly” remember the Lord’s death in partaking the Lord’s sup-

per. Instrumental music will be used in the worship *“for the purpose of making the singing of hymns less threatening and providing a musical sound path for all to follow”* despite the Lord not authorizing such of His followers (*Colossians 3:16*). I wonder if the Lord knew how “threatening” his command to sing by merely speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs would become (*Ephesians 5:19*)?

Jesus met in synagogues, private homes, by the sea shore and in the mountain. But we never see Him creating another barrier to making people holy by meeting in places not conducive for holy living.

Your friends at Southern Hills are coming to create “acceptance” as you sit on your blanket and sip your suds. Don’t worry if *“...not big on social graces...”* Come! *“Slip on down to the oasis”* (*Memories*). Forget those “church people” who intimidate you with “rules” for holy living. Leave them to their high “Ivory Tower”. *“Oh, I’ve got friends in low places”*.