

# On God and Beer

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## Abstract

This article summarizes the history of Alcohol in the Christian Church. We address the following periods within the Church:

- **Scriptures:** We start with the Holy Scriptures, where God provides His written word, and Jesus founded the Church
- **Early Church Fathers:** We examine the Early Church Fathers who led the Church in the first few Centuries after the New Testament Church
- **Protestant Reformation:** We review the leaders of the Reformation (late medieval period), a pivotal point in Christian history when the Church cleansed itself of non-Biblical and unethical practices.
- **Post Reformation / Birth of United States:** We review post-Reformation Church leaders to see how beer and alcohol were embraced during the foundation and growth of the United States.

We conclude that Scriptures and post-Biblical tradition testify that alcohol consumption is both allowable and a divine provision for our enjoyment when taken in moderation responsibly.

## Difference between Biblical Teaching and an American Church Subculture

There is a dichotomy between Biblical teachings and an American Church Subculture with regards to alcohol consumption. Perhaps there is good reason for caution since alcohol abuse has caused destruction in the lives of many alcoholics and their families. There are about 88,000 deaths attributable to excessive alcohol use each year in the United States according to the CDC [1]. However many Christians have extended their concern to people who do not abuse alcohol. They specifically target alcohol while ignoring other larger scale issues where people abuse God's good provisions. For example, the CDC has documented that over 1/3 of the adult population is obese [2], and 112,000 deaths are attributed to obesity in the US each year [3]. Food abuse affects more people and causes more deaths annually than alcohol abuse, but the Christian culture does not typically call out obesity. Instead, many churches discourage comments against obesity and enable obesity through potluck buffets and church socials. In fact, a 2006 Purdue study found that the fundamental Christians are by far the heaviest of all religious groups led by the Baptists with a 30% obesity rate compared with Jews at 1%, Buddhists and Hindus at 0.7% [4]. There is a culture in the church that selectively brings judgement which is separate from Biblical morality. God has called us to discern morality, but He did not call us to be the deliverer of judgement. We should help people avoid drinking when they struggle with drinking

responsibly. However we should not judge or condemn people that enjoy the responsible consumption of alcohol, just like we shouldn't judge or condemn people that enjoy the responsible consumption of food. God has blessed us with good food, wine and beer. The Bible indicates that beer and wine, in moderation, is a blessing of God. However it is clear that the Bible also warns people to avoid drunkenness. There were early church fathers and prominent leaders of the Reformation that were strong advocates of beer and wine. It wasn't until the time of Prohibition (1920-1933) that the American church developed a subculture against alcohol that still lingers in many churches today. [5]

## Learn about Alcohol in the Bible and Church History:

### What the Bible Says about Alcohol

The Bible makes many references to alcohol. There are negative references which warn against drunkenness. There are neutral statements where alcohol was mentioned as part of the story, and give an historical record of alcohol consumption, but was not a negative or positive element. The neutrality of the use of alcohol by God's people testifies that it is allowable. Then there are many references where wine is described as a blessing of God. These positive references indicate that it is not only allowable, but a blessing that can bring us joy as long as we drink responsibly.

Therefore the observations that we make are as follows:

1. God's people drank alcohol in both the Old Testament and New Testament. Jesus even drank alcohol. See FAQ item "Did Jesus Drink Alcohol?"
2. God does not want us to be drunk. We must drink responsibly if we choose to drink. See Section Below on Drunkenness
3. God has blessed His people with good wine and beer, and since God doesn't change, we can know that good wine and beer continue to be a blessing of God.

### Negative Statements about Alcohol

- We are called to be sober – not drunk. All negative statements about alcohol refer to its abuse, and drunken behavior.
  - " Proverbs 20:1 Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.
  - " Ephesians 5:17-19 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord.
  - " 1 Corinthians 6:10 Nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.
- More references to drunkenness provided below in section below: What the Bible Says about Drunkenness

## Neutral Statements about Alcohol

- There are references that mention alcohol as part of the story, but not in a way that describes it as a bad thing or a good thing.

” Genesis 14:18-19a Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram.

” Nehemiah 2:1-2 In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before, so the king asked me, “Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart.” [Nehemiah tasted the wine to ensure it was not poisoned]

” Job 1:13 One day when Job’s sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house

## Positive Statements about Alcohol

- There are references that refer to good wine as a blessing from God.

” Deuteronomy 14:26 Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine or other fermented drink, or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the Lord your God and rejoice. [Instructions on using tithe to honor the Lord]

” Psalm 4:7 Many, Lord, are asking, “Who will bring us prosperity?” Let the light of your face shine on us. Fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound. [Joy in the Lord compared to abundance of wine]

” Psalm 104:14-15 He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread that sustains their hearts. [God is credited as creator of wine "which gladdens human hearts"]

” Isaiah 25:6 On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine — the best of meats and the finest of wines. [aged wine is obviously fermented]

## What the Bible says about Abstaining

Some argue that we should avoid drinking at all times because we are called to avoid leading others into temptation:

” Romans 14:21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.

We agree that you should not drink alcohol knowingly in the presence of someone struggling with alcohol. However you can comply with this Biblical teaching while enjoying a glass of beer or wine in public, as long as you aren't purposefully drinking in front of someone struggling. We can't really help unknown people with unknown problems. It is ok to choose to abstain, but if we really want to avoid all sources of temptation for other people, then we would need to abstain from: meat (as stated in Romans), sweets, gluten, cholesterol packed foods, and high-fat foods since all of these have potential to cause an unknown person with health and/or obesity issues to be tempted and fall. The bottom line is that we each need to decide what we believe is moral according to God's plan for our lives. I may believe it is ok to enjoy a beer, while another person may not believe it is a wise thing to do. We each need to live our lives according to our beliefs such that we honor God with our personal faith. This is exactly what the two verses after Romans 14:21 speak of:

" Romans 14:22-23 So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

### **What the Bible Says about Drunkenness**

The Bible clearly warns against Drunkenness. Drinking is not a sin, but being drunk is. God's word says we need to be sober, as it is not wise to be drunk and can lead to debauchery. In an even more direct statement, Paul declares on multiple occasions that drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God. Here are some examples of scriptural warnings against drunkenness:

" Ephesians 5:17-19 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord.

" Galatians 5:19-21 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

" 1 Corinthians 6:10 Nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

" Proverbs 23:20-21 Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.

" Romans 13:13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.

" Proverbs 20:1 Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.

” 1 Thessalonians 5:6-10 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.

” 1 Timothy 3:2-3 Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

### **Are Biblical references to Wine actually references to grape juice?**

The Bible makes many references to wine, including direct references by Jesus, so the opponents to alcohol are left to produce an argument that reconciles this fact with their belief. They typically argue that Biblical references to wine is actually a reference to grape juice. Let's take a closer look at this argument: It is clear that Jesus made wine as documented in John 2:1-11. Some argue that He made grape juice. They base the argument on the Greek word used here Oinos (οἶνος), which is used to represent both fermented and unfermented grape juice. This is an accurate translation, as ambiguity exists in the original Greek word. However when understood within the context of the passage, it becomes clear that Jesus made wine, not grape juice. This is a wedding party where wine would have been drunk, not grape juice. Verse 10 supports the case that Oinos represents wine by stating people's judgment is affected "after the guests have had too much to drink". People's judgment is not affected by drinking too much grape juice. Jesus clearly supported the practice of drinking wine. In fact, according to this scripture, he brewed a lot of it: 120-160 gallons! Additionally, Jesus stated himself that he drank alcohol. In Matt 11:18-19 and Luke 7:33-35 Jesus says:

” “For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved right by her deeds.”

Surely this quote of Jesus is not grape juice. Jesus was not a drunkard, but his mockers (Pharisees) called him a drunkard due to his consumption of alcohol (probably wine primarily). Finally, at the Pentecost, the Apostles were accused of drinking too much wine when they were filled with the Holy Spirit and were speaking in tongues.

” Acts 2:13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

The Greek Word for wine here is Gleukos (γλεῦκος), which is translated as “New Sweet Wine”. People claim that “New Wine” is a reference to grape juice, but again, when read in context the Apostles strange behavior (filled with the Spirit and speaking in tongues) would not be attributed to grape juice. It would be attributed to drinking too much wine. In conclusion, it is difficult to accept the argument that Biblical references to wine are really references to grape juice. It is true that there are Biblical

references to different forms of fermented and unfermented grape juice (and spoiled vinegar), and some of those references are ambiguous when read without context. Christian Assemblies International provide a great summary of all Hebrew and Greek words translated in English as “Wine” [6]. When read in context, it is clear in the Bible that Jesus himself both made and consumed wine.

## **Early Church Fathers’ Position on Alcohol Consumption**

Yes, they do support responsible consumption, but warn against drunkenness. The early Church Fathers were the leaders of the church post New Testament. They make little reference to wine except to clarify its use during the Eucharist (i.e. Communion), so the consumption of alcohol did not seem to be a mainstream issue, but they did record a few teachings about drinking and drunkenness. Here are some examples Early Church Fathers’ Position on Alcohol Consumption

### **Clement of Alexandria (150-215)**

Clement of Alexandria cautions against child consumption of alcohol as it makes it even harder to control their raging hormones. He also cautions against excessive drinking but Clement validates the adult consumption of wine in moderation, and encourages it for the elderly:

” The Instructor, Book II, Chapter II- On Drinking. I therefore admire those who have adopted an austere life, and who are fond of water, the medicine of temperance, and flee as far as possible from wine, shunning it as they would the danger of fire. It is proper, therefore, that boys and girls should keep as much as possible away from this medicine. For it is not right to pour into the burning season of life the hottest of all liquids—wine—adding, as it were, fire to fire. For hence wild impulses and burning lusts and fiery habits are kindled; and young men inflamed from within become prone to the indulgence of vicious propensities; so that signs of injury appear in their body, the members of lust coming to maturity sooner than they ought....And in the case of grown-up people, let those with whom it agrees sometimes partake of dinner...But towards evening, about supper-time, wine may be used, when we are no longer engaged in more serious readings. Then also the air becomes colder than it is during the day; so that the failing natural warmth requires to be nourished by the introduction of heat. But even then it must only be a little wine that is to be used; for we must not go on to intemperate potations. Those who are already advanced in life may partake more cheerfully of the draught, to warm by the harmless medicine of the vine the chill of age, which the decay of time has produced. For old men’s passions are not, for the most part, stirred to such agitation as to drive them to the shipwreck of drunkenness...It has therefore been well said, “A joy of the soul and heart was wine created from the beginning, when drunk in moderate sufficiency.”

### **Methodius of Olympus (unknown – 311)**

Methodius of Olympus discusses the difference between acceptable sober, joyful drinking and poisonous drunkenness:

” Chapter 5, The Vow of Chastity, and Its Rites in the Law; Vines, Christ, and the Devil: For we perceive from the Scriptures two kinds of vines which were separate from each other, and were

unlike. For the one is productive of immortality and righteousness; but the other of madness and insanity. The sober and joy-producing vine, from whose instructions, as from branches, there joyfully hang down clusters of graces, distilling love, is our Lord Jesus, who says expressly to the apostles, "I am the true vine, ye are the branches; and my Father is the husbandman." But the wild and death-bearing vine is the devil, who drops down fury and poison and wrath, as Moses relates, writing concerning him, "For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps."

### **Basil the Great (330-379)**

Basil the Great discusses the blessing of wine, but cautions against being enslaved by it.

- " Homily 5 – The Germination of the Earth: "Such is the vine, which produces wine to make glad the heart of man; such is the olive tree, whose fruit brightens his face with oil."
- " Letter XXII – Without address. On the Perfection of the Life of Solitaries: "The Christian ought not to be enslaved by wine."
- " Letter XLIV – To a Lapsed Monk: "Remember the mercies of God and how He cures with oil and wine."

### **John Chrysostom (347-407)**

John Chrysostom explains how wine was provided by God for sober enjoyment, but not for drunkenness. He argues against those that say we should not drink wine which is the workmanship of God. Instead we should argue against drunkenness which is the work of the devil.

- " Archbishop of Constantinople, Addressed to the People of Antioch, Concerning the Statues, Homily 1 – The Argument: For wine was given us of God, not that we might be drunken, but that we might be sober; that we might be glad, not that we get ourselves pain. "Wine," it says, "maketh glad the heart of man," but thou makest it matter for sadness; since those who are inebriated are sullen beyond measure, and great darkness over-spreads their thoughts. It is the best medicine, when it has the best moderation to direct it. The passage before us is useful also against heretics, who speak evil of God's creatures; for if it had been among the number of things forbidden, Paul would not have permitted it, nor would have said it was to be used. And not only against the heretics, but against the simple ones among our brethren, who when they see any persons disgracing themselves from drunkenness, instead of reproofing such, blame the fruit given them by God, and say, "Let there be no wine." We should say then in answer to such, "Let there be no drunkenness; for wine is the work of God, but drunkenness is the work of the devil. Wine maketh not drunkenness; but intemperance produceth it. Do not accuse that which is the workmanship of God, but accuse the madness of a fellow mortal. But thou, while omitting to reprove and correct the sinner, treatest thy Benefactor with contempt!" When, therefore, we hear men saying such things, we should stop their mouths; for it is not the use of wine, but the want of moderation which produces drunkenness, Drunkenness! that root of all evils. Wine

was given to restore the body's weakness, not to overturn the soul's strength; to remove the sickness of the flesh, not to destroy the health of the spirit.

### **St. Arnold – Patron Saint of Brewers (580-640)**

You read that right. The Catholic Church embraced beer to the point of naming a Patron Saint of Brewers. He spent his ministry warning peasants about the dangers of drinking water as there were many water born illnesses such as Cholera. He educated people that beer was a safe alternative. The water in Europe was contaminated and we now know that the bacteria was killed when boiling the water during the brew process, and the yeast activity (which ferments the beer) kills microorganisms, and the alcohol content (although not high) protects the beer from a bacterial infection. After his death, the citizens of Metz requested that Saint Arnold's body be exhumed and ceremoniously carried to Metz for reburial in their Church of the Holy Apostles. During this voyage a miracle came to pass in the town of Champignuelles. The tired porters and followers stopped for a rest and walked into a tavern for a drink of their favorite beverage. Regretfully, there was only one mug of beer to be shared, but that mug never ran dry and all of the thirsty pilgrims were satisfied. This is why Saint Arnold is recognized by the Catholic Church as the Patron Saint of Brewers. [7]

” St. Arnolde is quoted as saying “From man's sweat and God's love, beer came into the world.”

### **Reformation Leaders' Position on Alcohol Consumption**

The Reformation was started to reform the Roman Catholic Church which was accused of false doctrine and was engaging in immoral practices within the church such as the selling of Indulgences (purchase right to be freed from punishment of sins) and Simony (the selling of Clerical roles of office within the church).

### **Martin Luther (1483-1546)**

Martin Luther was the leader that initiated the Protestant Reformation. On October 31, 1517 he posted the famous “95 Theses” to the door of a Catholic Church and sent a couple copies to the leader of the church. The 95 Theses challenged the position of the Church with regards to its alignment with the Bible. Martin Luther and his wife were also prominent brewers of beer. He made a witty comment with regards to beer and his role in the Reformation:

” “I opposed indulgences and all the papists, but never with force. I simply taught, preached, and wrote God's Word; otherwise I did nothing. And while I slept [cf. Mark 4:26–29], or drank Wittenberg beer with my friends Philipp [Melanchthon] and [Nicholas] Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses upon it. I did nothing; the Word did everything.” [9]

We also learn that his wife was a very good brewer, perhaps even better than he, as evidence by a letter he wrote to her while he was on travel away from home:

” To my kind, dear lord, Lady Catherine von Bora, Mrs. Doctor Luther, at Wittenberg. Grace and peace in Christ! Dear Sir Katie! I know of nothing to write to you since Master Philip, together with the others, is coming home. I have to remain here longer for the devout Sovereign’s sake. You might wonder how long I shall remain here, or how you might set me free. I think that Master Francis will set me free, just as I freed him—but not so soon. Yesterday I drank something which did not agree with me, so that I had to sing: If I don’t drink well I have to suffer, and [yet] I do like to do it. I said to myself what good wine and beer I have at home, and also [what] a pretty lady or (should I say) lord. You would do well to ship the whole cellar full of my wine and a bottle of your beer to me here, as soon as you are able; otherwise I will not be able to return home because of the new beer. With this I commend you to God, together with our young ones and all the members of our household. Amen. July 29, 1534 The Man whom you Love Martin Luther, Doctor [10] You must wonder how long I am likely to stay or, rather, how long you will be rid of me. I keep thinking what good wine and beer I have at home, as well as a beautiful wife, or shall I say lord? [11]

Luther even made a witty comment about baptism and beer:

” “Table Talk No. 394: Prenatal Baptisms Are Ridiculed December, 1532 “... Besides, the Word is the principal part of baptism. If in an emergency there’s no water at hand, it doesn’t matter whether water or beer is used.”

Luther also made a point to agree with the law in the city of Augsburg in the 13th century:

” “The selling of bad beer is a crime against Christian love”

Luther also made witty argument against people who prohibit alcohol because it can be abused.

” “Do you suppose that abuses are eliminated by destroying the object which is abused? Men can go wrong with wine and women. Shall we then prohibit and abolish women? The sun, the moon, and the stars have been worshipped. Shall we then pluck them out of the sky? ... See how much He has been able to accomplish through me, though I did no more than pray and preach. The Word did it all. Had I wished I might have started a conflagration at Worms. But while I sat still and drank beer with Philip and Amsdorf, God dealt the papacy a mighty blow.” [12]

### **John Calvin (1509-1564)**

John Calvin joined Martin Luther in helping lead the Protestant Reformation in Europe. Like Luther, he is widely respected and condoned & participated in the consumption of alcohol. Calvin’s annual salary in Geneva included seven barrels of wine. In the following quote, Calvin states that it is permissible to drink and enjoy wine. It is not just meeting a functional need.

” The Institutes of Christian Religion: We are nowhere forbidden to laugh, or be satisfied with food.... lighted with music, or to drink wine” He also inked, “It is permissible to use wine not only for necessity, but also to make us merry.”

Calvin was persuaded that wine should be served during the administration of the Lord’s supper.

” “But why is the body of our Lord figured by bread, and his blood by wine?” He answered that “by wine the hearts of men are gladdened, their strength recruited, and the whole man strengthened, so by the blood of our Lord the same benefits are received by our souls.”

Calvin also compared music with wine. He believed that music was the first gift of God, having the power to:

” Music is the first gift of God, having the power to “enter the heart like wine poured into a vessel, with good or evil effect.” [11]

Calvin argued that God made the earthly blessings for our benefit and enjoyment:

” If we consider for what end he created food, we shall find that he consulted not only for our necessity, but also for our enjoyment and delight. Thus, in clothing, the end was, in addition to necessity, comeliness and honour; and in herbs, fruits, and trees, besides their various uses, gracefulness of appearance and sweetness of smell. Were it not so, the Prophet would not enumerate among the mercies of God “wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine,” (Ps. 104:15). [13]

### **John Knox (1514-1572)**

John Knox, the Scottish Reformer, composed a letter before leaving Scotland on how Protestant religious instruction should be practiced in his absence. He urged Protestants to read the Bible regularly, even if God’s elect people became board or weary. If they wearied, the antidote was to remember their persecuted brethren who were in no position to read the Bible at all. Knox argued:

” “If such men as having to read and exercise themselves in God’s holy Scriptures, and yet begin to weary, because from time to time they read but one thing, I ask, why weary they not also each to eat bread? Every day to drink wine? Every day to behold the brightness of the sun?” [14]

The premise that wine drinking was a daily occurrence is undeniable in Knox’s quote.

### **Post Reformation Leaders Position on Alcohol Consumption**

The United States was about to form not too long after the period of the Reformation, driven in part by the motivation for Europeans to find freedom of religion. The views of the early settlers and the church leaders of America-past give us an interesting perspective as to how cultural-acceptance of alcohol has changed from the country’s roots in the 1600s to post-prohibition days in the 1900s.

## **Pilgrims (1620)**

The Pilgrims chose to land at Plymouth Rock because they had run out of beer. This may sound absurd, but keep in mind that they had been on the boat for a couple of months and their water would have become brackish which could cause sickness and even death. The alcohol in the Beer kept it safe to drink. They had set course for Virginia and were off course, and as such had used up their supply of beer. We read about their journey from Alexander Young in "The Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers of the Colony of Plymouth, from 1602-1625". [15]

" So in the morning, after we had called on God for direction, we came to this resolution, to go presently ashore again, and to take a better view of two places which we thought most fitting for us ; for we could not now take time for further search or consideration, our victuals being much spent, especially our beer, and it being now the 19th of December. After our landing and viewing of the places, so well as we could, we came to a conclusion, by most voices, to set on the main land, on the first place, on a high ground, where there is a great deal of land cleared, and hath been planted with corn three or four years ago; and there is a very sweet brook\* runs under the hill side, and many delicate springs of as good water as can be drunk, and where we may harbour our shallops and boats exceeding well ; and in this brook much good fish in their seasons; on the further side of the river also much corn-ground cleared.

Barley was scarce, and the Pilgrims made beer from corn, so the references to the corn fields were important not only for food, but also for drink. They were hesitant to drink the fresh water in the Americas because they were accustomed to contaminated water in Europe and were not confident the water was safe. To this end, beer was of such importance to the colonists that the first permanent structure that they built on land was a brewery. [16]

## **George Whitefield (1714-1770)**

George Whitefield was an Anglican evangelist from England and the leader of Calvinistic Methodists. He was the most popular preacher of the Evangelical Revival in Great Britain and the Great Awakening in America. Whitefield seems to have enjoyed a glass of rum. He ended one of his letters with a thankful note for some rum: [16]

" Give thanks to that friendly brewer for the keg of rum he sent us.

Perhaps more importantly, Whitefield stated his agreement with Georgia law that permitted the use of rum: [16]

" I believe God will take Georgia into His own hands. Its affairs have lately been before the House of Commons, where thankfully, the use of rum was granted.

## **C.S. Lewis (1889-1963)**

C.S. Lewis was a legendary author and a great Apologetic Christian think-tank. He is one of the most respected Christian scholars and is revered by all Christian denominations. The Inklings were a group

who met on a weekly basis to read manuscripts and discuss questions. The group included C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien among others. They met on Tuesday mornings at the Eagle and Child pub in Oxford (later they met in The Lamb and Flag pub across the street). [17] It was in Inklings discussions where C.S. Lewis transitioned from believing in God to also believing in Christ. This is exactly why we believe that WWJB is an important mission. Beer can bring people together to connect.

” Mere Christianity: One of the marks of a certain type of bad man is that he cannot give up a thing himself without wanting every one else to give it up. That is not the Christian way. An individual Christian may see fit to give up all sorts of things for special reasons—marriage, or meat, or beer, or the cinema; but the moment he starts saying the things are bad in themselves, or looking down his nose at other people who do use them, he has taken the wrong turning. [18]

## **If not Biblical, then what led a Christian Subculture to Object to Drinking?**

An excerpt from Christianity Today provides a interesting analysis of what may have led to the anti-alcohol Christian subculture: [8]

” Where did evangelical objections to smoking and drinking come from? Though Christian objections to alcohol and tobacco may be called “Puritanical” by some, these stances are actually of much more recent vintage. In fact, the Puritans drank beer. The Mayflower log book from 1620 records that one of the reasons that ship stopped at Plymouth, rather than searching for a more hospitable spot further south, was “our victuals being much spent, especially our beere.” Concerted campaigns against drinking and smoking began in the early nineteenth century. Alcohol—particularly hard liquor—was the primary concern. Coalitions of pastors, civic leaders, and especially women argued that liquor destroyed lives, ravaged families, eroded morality, and contributed to crime. Drinkers were called upon to “temper” their habits, switching from spirits to beer, or to abstain from alcohol completely. Legal prohibition of alcohol in the U.S. (1920-1933), interestingly, may have had as much to do with patriotism as with religion. Families of German origin—such as Pabst, Miller, Schlitz, and Anheuser—controlled most of America’s major breweries in the early 1900s. Then, in 1917, America declared war on Germany. It’s more than coincidence that Congress passed the Volstead Act, the basis for Prohibition, just two years later. American Prohibition was repealed in 1933, but Fundamentalists, their neo-evangelical heirs, and Pentecostals still generally shun drinking. These Christians may also object more strenuously to smoking than does the general population, though they also may not, considering that America’s Bible Belt doubles as its main tobacco-producing region.

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