

Would Jesus Go to Hog Wild?

Kerry Doyal

Coconuts, one of the Model City's newest night spots (read "dance hall and drinking hole"), probably does not have to deal with many church groups fighting for seats. I am guessing the press for tables by hungry and cantankerous Christians after church is not a logistical concern of theirs. (Sadly, many restaurateurs may envy this distinction - but alas, that will have to wait for a future column.) It is safe to say that the absence of followers of Jesus at Coconuts is probably not because they are such diehard patrons of Hog Wild. No, we all know that good Christian people don't go to such places. Or do they?

To make the question as sharply focused as possible, allow me to tweak it just a bit. Would Jesus go to these places? Would He be caught dead near the dance floor, sipping a diet Coke, watching the Braves on a big o' screen TV, making conversation over rock music with other patrons (some of which forgot to wear their Sunday go to meeting clothes!)? Does this query even fit in the pale of biblical sanity? Would it make more sense to discuss the chances of a snowball in Haiti?

Is asking the question disrespectful at best and blasphemous at its very core? What kind of a "preacher" would even entertain such thinking? Picket the place? Yes, Jesus might do that, we reason. Spearhead a petition drive? Maybe, says we. Organize a prayer vigil on the sidewalk? Possibly. Preach to those going in, offering them tracts? Very likely. But, pay the cover charge, expose Himself to worldly music, or risk being seen with people who dress immodestly in their effort to impress? Jesus in such an obvious outpost of hell? What could I be thinking? Or reading?

Sadly, Jesus was in a sense "caught dead" often in such places in His earthly ministry. It was His unashamed and purposeful mingling with such "riff raff" that set off those who would finally chase Him to His death. Jesus sought out, entertained, and welcomed some of the lowliest varmints of His day. In fact, those who seemed most comfortable in His holy presence were the least holy. Conversely, those whose struggled most with Him and His mission were the "holiest". Since "the well" do not need a doctor (wellness checks aside), Jesus did not come to look after them. He brought His spiritual stethoscope and cure for the spiritually sick. Jesus made it clear that since some said they already "saw" (had spiritual 20/20), they did not know they were in fact blind. Had they seen their blindness, they could have seen who He was and what He was up to (Matt. 9; John 9:35-41; Luke 4:18-21). Do we?

The immoral people God's children are to actively distance themselves

from are other believers who live as if blatant sin in their life is not contradictory to being a follower of Jesus. From such we are to pull away - not those who make no pretense of being a Christian (1 Corin. 5:9-13). Immoral worldlings we are to seek out in the manner of Him who came for the very purpose of seeking and saving the lost. Jesus was willing to be seen publicly with an immoral "five time loser" (John 4) so He could offer Her a drink (new life He alone can offer). What excuses do we have for NOT visiting certain places so we can love certain people (see John 4 and Luke 7:33-50)?

Some of the places you may want to go to meet with Jesus and hang out with "His kind of people" might not look like a church. Instead of stained glass and pews, it might have a disco ball, a jukebox, biker babes and others who might be ready to hear and see Jesus' message of love and forgiveness. (For the record, no saloon paid me to write this piece, but I would entertain an after-the-fact free meal. Maybe they can start a "bring in your bulletin" discount program.)