



THE PASTOR'S PEN

Volume 43 No. 124

December 03, 2013

Deck the Hall with What?

The Associated Press ran the following story recently. Read it over and think about for a moment.

LOS ANGELES (AP) — It looked like a typical Sunday morning at any mega-church. Hundreds packed in for more than an hour of rousing music, an inspirational sermon, a reading and some quiet reflection. The only thing missing was God.

The inaugural “[Sunday Assembly](#)” in Los Angeles attracted more than 400 attendees, all bound by their belief in non-belief. Hundreds of atheists and atheist-curious packed into a Hollywood auditorium for a boisterous service filled with live music, moments of reflection and an “inspirational talk,” and some stand-up comedy by Jones, the movement’s co-founder.

During the service, attendees stomped their feet, clapped their hands and cheered as Jones and Evans led the group through rousing renditions of “Lean on Me,” “Here Comes the Sun” and other hits that took the place of gospel songs. Congregants dissolved into laughter at a get-to-know-you game that involved clapping and slapping the hands of the person next to them and applauded as members of the audience spoke about community service projects they had started in LA.

At the end, volunteers passed cardboard boxes for donations as attendees mingled over coffee and pastries and children played on the floor.

At first reading you are probably shaking your head in disbelief as you re-read the story to make sure you read it correctly the first time. You did. It is about an Atheist Mega-Church in California. “Ah, California, that explains it,” you say to yourself. If only that did explain it... No, there are over forty of these “churches” across the US, North America, the UK and Australia. The movement is worldwide and growing.

The concept of an Atheist Church is not a bad dream, it is not a joke and it is not going away. It is a part of our world. They have the freedom to believe what they want, just as we do.

Now while we cannot order them to stop or put an end to their practice of calling themselves a church, we should not just sit idly by as they grow and spread either. It is up to each and every one of us as disciples of Christ to share the gospel message of the death, burial and resurrection with others. Jesus called us to evangelism as His last command immediately before he ascended up into the heavens. How are we doing in fulfilling that command? How are **you** doing in fulfilling that command?

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we must be active in sharing our faith with others. Jesus is counting on us to do that. This Advent/Christmastide season is the perfect opportunity to share the good news with others. We can offer it in carols, in greeting cards, decorations on our homes and in our communities, in the gifts we give and by inviting others to our carol sings, children’s programs, Christmas Eve Candlelight Service and other religious activities taking place in our homes and our congregation gatherings. However, to get them here, we have to invite them here just like the Atheists have done for their church. If it is so simple and effective that a person with no spiritual support or Divine assistance can do it, how much more should be able to accomplish with God’s blessings?

Out Inviting Folks in for the Holidays,

James