

Megachurch Causes Stir Over Easter Invites

Who knew Easter could be so controversial?

Megachurch Elevation Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, has been stirring up controversy over this year's invitations.

Digital content creator Nikki Shearer explained in an interview with Pro Church Tools why the church will not be using key phrases like "the blood of Jesus," "resurrection" or "Calvary" on their Easter invites.

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"For us, the most important thing on Easter is inviting people to church," Shearer says. "Easter and Christmas are the only two Sundays of the year that actually are wrapped around a particular passage in the Bible."

She explains that these events are tied directly to the mission of the church. Therefore, she says when she thinks of these events, she thinks of them in light of talking to someone who does not regularly attend church.

"Talking all the way from people who've been in our church for years, and I want them to invite people to church, all the way to people who've never heard of our church before and trying to get them to come to church, people who are do I talk to those two people are really different."

Shearer says most of her focus and energy has been placed on reaching those who are far from God.

"I'm not going to say the word 'Calvary,' I'm not going to say the word 'resurrection,' I'm not going to say 'the blood of

Jesus,'" Shearer says. "I'm not going to say any of these words that makes someone feel like an outsider."

Shearer says this is important for letting people feel welcomed into the church.

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"Anyone can be a part of our church. It might not be for everyone. Everyone might not like it, but anyone can come," says Shearer.

However, not everyone agrees with Shearer's take on not using these biblical terms on Easter invitations.

Pastor and author Shane Idleman said, "So sad to see this coming out of Elevation. Never gauge success by numbers, but by to the scriptures."

He continued with a warning. "...or you may find yourself in the same spot as Samson: 'knowing not that the Spirit has departed.'"

On the Elevation website, there is an Easter message that can be copied and pasted to send to those you plan on inviting.

"Hey, do you have plans for Easter Sunday?" The message reads. "I'm heading to Easter at Elevation. Would you like to join me? The music and the message are always incredible. It's honestly one of my favorite ways to celebrate the holiday. I'd love to have you as my guest this year!"

The Good Friday service is promoted as a communion service to "reflect on the sacrifice Jesus made for us on the cross" while the Easter Sunday description says "Jesus' death and resurrection remind is still at work..."

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