

Prince of the Power of the Air Uses Classic Christian Hymn to Sell Beer

While the debate rages on about whether Christians should drink alcohol, one beer brand may be subliminally wooing Bible-carrying believers to drink its brew using a popular gospel hymn as background music in a commercial.

One Million Moms called out Guinness & Co. for using “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms” as the underscore of its latest marketing campaign. Although the words are missing from the 1887 hymn, which was written by Anthony Showalter and Elisha Hoffman to comfort those who had lost loved ones, many Christians who recognized the classic hymn are crying foul.

Inspired by Deuteronomy 33:27 (KJV), “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are everlasting arms,” the hymn has found its way into popular culture over the last 70 years. The music has appeared in movies like *Wild Bill* and *True Grit*. Musical artists such as Mahalia Jackson and George Jones have recorded the hymn in their works. And it’s not the first time Guinness has used the song. The company also drew from the famous hymn for a commercial called “Empty Chair.”

Maybe you’ve heard it. The refrain goes like this: “Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms/ Leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms/ O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way/ Leaning on the everlasting arms/ O how bright the path grows from day to day/ Leaning on the everlasting arms.”

What’s the Big Deal?

“The cherished ‘Everlasting Arms’ hymn has no place in a beer commercial,” One Million Moms charges. “Christian music should not be associated with an advertisement promoting drinking.

The choice of including this hymn in the ad disrespects the Christian faith.”

What’s the big deal, you ask?

There’s a high pile of alcohol-abuse statistics that sound the danger alarm. About 17 million adults 18 and older had an Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) in 2012, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Only about 1.4 million sought treatment, which means about 16 million remain in bondage to the spirits that wreak havoc on their lives—and the lives of those who love them. Nearly 88,000 people die from alcohol-related causes annually, NIH reports, making it the third-leading preventable cause of death in the United States.

The problem in today’s society is that too many people are leaning on the arm of alcohol instead of leaning on the safe and secure everlasting arms of the Lord. More and more, pastors are encouraging the practice as an evangelism tool. Pastor Jim Burgen of Flatirons Community Church in Lafayette, Colorado, and his buddies limit themselves to two hand-crafted beers before 8:15 p.m. Meanwhile, Queen Elizabeth greeted Pope Francis with eggs, whiskey and beer in the national spotlight.

Although the Bible does not forbid drinking—it speaks against intoxication (see Eph. 5:18)—it’s clear that alcohol is associated with many sins, including incest (Gen. 19:32-35); madness (Jer. 51:7); violence (Prov. 4:17); adultery (Rev. 17:2); murder (2 Sam. 11:13); mocking and brawling (Prov. 20:1); poverty (Prov. 21:17) and depression (Luke 21:34).

Sneaky, Subtle, Stealthy

Duck Dynasty, whose cast members are among the most upright Christian families in the public eye today, has its own wine brand. So I’m not suggesting that a Christian is living in sin if they drink a glass of wine or even a beer. The issue is subtle: The enemy is roaming about like a roaring lion seeking somebody to devour—which is why Peter warns us to be sober and

vigilant (see 1 Peter 5:8). The Amplified translation says to be “well balanced (temperate, sober of mind), be vigilant and cautious at all times.”

Too often, the drinking doesn't stop at two hand-crafted beers before 8:15 p.m. Too often, it opens the door to excess. I wrote about one worship leader who serves as a prime example: “My name is Darin,” the Methodist congregation's 37-year-old music director said, grinning, according to the *Journal*. “And I like me a 30-pack of Busch Light!”

Really? A 30-pack of Busch Light? I hope he was kidding, but even still, I find it shocking that a worship leader would quip about drinking enough to intoxicate an elephant, or at least a large horse.

Anyway, the point is that the enemy is roaming about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour—and he's sneaky. He's subtle. He's stealthy. What starts as two hand-crafted beers before 8:15 p.m. can soon enough turn into a 30-pack of Busch Light that leads to debauchery. And the prince of the power of the air knows exactly what he's doing by using a beloved Christian hymn in not one—but two—beer commercials.

It's sneaky. It's subtle. It's stealthy—but the strategy is clear. The enemy wants us to, more and more, put our guards down when it comes to this mind-altering substance so he can entice saints to violence, adultery, poverty, depression and other sins. Again, I am not forbidding you to drink a glass of wine. I don't have that right. But don't be deceived. “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Prov. 20:1).

Kenny Luck of Every Man Ministries rightly says that drinking is intertwined in our culture with almost every event in life, whether it's a wedding or a funeral—but it's hardly new. His take: “Rather than pour out your problems to the next bartender, take a drink of God's love and Spirit and see what

happens. It's better than a hangover, and it will quench your thirst forever."

Jennifer LeClaire is news editor at Charisma. She is also director of IHOP Fort Lauderdale and author of several books, including *The Making of a Prophet* and *The Spiritual Warrior's Guide to Defeating Jezebel*. You can email Jennifer at @ or visit her website [here](#). You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow her on Twitter.