

# Oologah Informer

Oologah Church of Christ, Oologah, Oklahoma

February 26, 2011

*Address:*

P.O. Box 527  
Oologah, OK 74053

*Phone Number:*

918-443-2025

*Meeting Place:*

Hwy 169  
South of Oologah

*Schedule of Services*

*Sunday:*

Bible Study 9:30 am  
Worship 10:30 am  
Worship 5:00 pm

*Wednesday:*

Bible Study 7:00 pm

*Evangelist:*

Vance Smith

*TV Programs :*

*Sunday 7:30 am*

SEARCH Program  
(TV 47/Cable 7)

*Website:*

[www.oologahcofc.org](http://www.oologahcofc.org)

## *Beverage Alcohol*

*Advocacy for Alcohol Rebutted Part 3*

By Louis Rushmore

- ***“When you eat fish or onion rings at a restaurant, you’re usually getting some beer at no extra charge.”***

Contemporary practice, right or wrong, cannot be used to prove the validity or even wrongness of an activity about which the Bible stipulates something. What God through the Bible affirms is all that matters. Man’s preferences cannot overrule God. Surely it is not a secret that God will have the last word in the final judgment. If God condemns consumption of alcohol, which he does through the Bible, man’s conduct contrariwise cannot set at naught the will of God.

While it is commonly believed that alcohol completely evaporates from foods that are prepared with it in the recipe, such is not altogether accurate. “Chefs and cooks can’t assume that when they simmer, bake, or torch (flambé to the more sophisticated cook) with alcohol that only the flavor remains when they’re ready to serve” (“Alcohol Evaporation in Cooking”).

The conventional wisdom accepted by

just about everyone in the food world is that all the alcohol you add to a dish evaporates or dissipates during cooking. It's wrong. In fact, you have to cook something for a good **three hours** to eradicate virtually all traces of alcohol. And some cooking methods are less effective at removing alcohol than just letting it stand out uncovered overnight. ("Does Alcohol Really Boil Away in Cooking?" emphasis added)

But despite lore that says all the alcohol burns off when you cook it, that is not always the case! According to a 1992 study by Augustin, et al at the Department of Food Science and Toxicology, Food Research Center in Moscow, Idaho, the amount of alcohol that actually cooks off varies, depending on how long the food has been cooked, how it's been cooked, at what temperature, and based upon the specific alcohol and food ingredients in question. ("Does Alcohol Burn Off")

Alcohol not only evaporates without heat, but the majority also burns off during the cooking process. **How much remains in the dish depends on the cooking method and amount of cooking time.** Those bourbon-soaked fruitcakes would have toturn into bricks before the alcohol evaporates. ("Cooking with Alcohol" emphasis added)

Apparently, the size of the cooking vessel plays a part in the amount of alcohol evaporation, too. "...the pot's surface area. The bigger the pan, the more surface area, the more alcohol that evaporates during cooking" ("Alcohol Evaporation in Cooking").

The government has devised an "Alcohol Burn-Off Chart," which can be obtained from a number of sources ("Cooking with Alcohol").

A study conducted by the US Department of Agriculture's Nutrient Data Laboratory calculated the percentage of alcohol remaining in a dish based on various cooking methods. The results are as follows:

<b>Preparation Method</b>	<b>Percent of Alcohol Retained</b>
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alcohol added to boiling liquid & removed from heat	85%
alcohol flamed	75%
no heat, stored overnight	70%
baked, 25 minutes, alcohol not stirred into mixture	45%
baked/simmered, alcohol stirred into mixture:	
• 15 minutes	40%
• 30 minutes	35%
• 1 hour	25%
• 1.5 hours	20%
• 2 hours	10%
• 2.5 hours	5%

**Now, it may be that the amount of alcohol in a dish is modest to start with, but the fact that some of the alcohol remains could be of significant concern to recovering alcoholics, parents, and others who have ethical or religious reasons for avoiding alcohol.** (“Does Alcohol Really Boil Away in Cooking?” emphasis added)

Since I have “religious reasons for avoiding alcohol,” I (and others attempting to honor divine instruction on this matter) would do well to avoid foods that we know have been prepared with alcohol. Especially cooking in one’s home, it would be advisable for the child of God to forgo the use of alcoholic beverages in food preparation. After all, even were a Christian to cook his dish containing alcohol for three hours or more on high heat to ensure the complete evaporation of alcohol, the reputation and influence of the child of God would already be tarnished (as well as the image of the Lord’s church besmirched) just purchasing the alcohol in the first place. Secondly, the child of God could not be certain that all the alcohol evaporated from his food preparation even with the greatest care because of the several variables involved in the evaporation of alcohol. It would be far better not to see how close one can get to violating divine instruction (on any subject) without actually violating it.

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# News & Notes

## *Visitors*

We would like to extend our welcome to you. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Also, please fill out a visitor's card located in the pew in front of you.

## *Please remember in your prayers:*

**Ed & Barbara Coats, Ruth Corbett, Allen & Joyce Cash, Mary Ann Haugh, Patrick Brown** (cancer treatment), **Steven Andrews, Dan & Mary Ann Haugh's Granddaughter**, and our **military forces** throughout the world.

## *Other News*

Please keep **Austin Lankford** in your prayers as he is going through cancer treatments at Hillcrest Hospital. Emma and Ruth, **Darla's sisters**, are not doing well and Ruth is still in the hospital. **Robert Duncan** has been traveling on business for the last few weeks.

## *Austin Lankford's Address:*

Hillcrest Medical Center  
1120 S. Utica  
Austin Lankford  
Room 7621  
Tulsa, OK 74104

- ***“When a person takes cough syrup he is consuming alcohol. If one can drink cough syrup without sinning, then social drinking is approved, too.”***

Once more, an appeal to a medicinal application of alcohol is wrongly supposed to demonstrate that social drinking is divinely approved. Alcohol is not the only drug that can affect a person similarly to the way in which alcohol affects humans. In any case, there often are alternative medicines to alcohol and similar drugs. Alcohol, once widely used in medicines, has been largely replaced with other medicines that do not possess the same detrimental effect on the human body. (Jeffcoat 128).

Further, social drinking and a medicinal application are not the same. They differ in purpose and quantity. It is merely desperately grasping for angles when one rationalizes that social drinking is acceptable to God by arguing for a medicinal use of alcohol.

The only conceivable way in which a medicinal dose of alcohol could commend anything akin to social drinking is if: (1) One's friends and acquaintances were all ill, (2) all the ill friends were afflicted by a malady that was favorably affected by consuming alcohol, (3) these ill friends assembled themselves together in one place, and (4) all these ill friends drank their medicine together. Incidentally, how many shots of whiskey or bottles of beer constitute a medicinal dosage of alcohol?

## **Proof Texts**

- **“He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart” (Psalm 104:13-15).**

By citing the above passage, proponents of social drinking suppose that: (1) the word “wine” appearing in the verse refers to alcoholic wine, and (2) alcoholic wine, not grape juice, would ‘make glad the heart of man.’ Both points are merely unsubstantiated assumptions.

First, just because some contemporary fellow attributes his happy disposition to the influence of alcohol, is no assurance that all other men now or anciently supposed that they, too, must be intoxicated to enjoy life. Second, the word “wine” is used in the Bible for both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. The context is the only way of determining which reference is meant.

Sadly, many people subscribe to the notion that the only way a person can be happy in this world is to be under the influence of alcohol. It does not occur to them, apparently, that something besides an alcoholic drink could result in “gladness.” A total misconception in today’s Alcoholic Age is that only wine (containing alcohol) could bring cheer. Nothing could be further from the truth. To be intoxicated can only bring depression, destruction, and disaster in the final analysis” (Wesley 79-80).

To discern from this passage that alcoholic wine is meant, one must come to the text with the presupposition that the reference pertains to alcohol. At the least, I can approach the same passage with the predisposed conclusion that the “wine” here is not alcoholic. In any case, the passage does not on the surface, other than what I have noted, tell whether the “wine” here is either alcoholic or non-alcoholic.

- **“It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak” (Romans 14:21).**

The argument goes something like this:

I cannot think of a clearer way for an apostle to demonstrate that drinking wine is not inherently sinful. Surely no one would contend that drinking grape juice offended the consciences of weak brethren. The word “wine” must refer to an alcoholic drink which ordinarily Christians were permitted to drink, comparable to the “flesh” which ordinarily Christians could eat.

Reference to Romans 14:21 is the strongest argument proponents of social drinking can make from the Bible. It, however, does not justify social drinking.

Even if Romans 14:21 mentioned in passing alcoholic wine, the context forbade its use because it offended the consciences of brethren. Therefore, Romans 14:21 fails to license *social drinking* because it offends the consciences of brethren. However, it is far from certain that the reference to “wine” here refers to beverage alcohol.

Biblical, historical, scientific and medical evidence to which reference has already been made in this series discount claims for social drinking based on Romans 14. The Romans 14 passage must be understood in harmony with all other biblical, historical and scientific evidence regarding wine in the biblical world. These Romans 14 context as alcoholic.

The Gospel of Christ was preached to Jews and Gentiles alike (Romans 1:16). It is reasonable to conclude that the church at Rome was comprised of both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 2:10). Romans 14:2-3 portrays Christians at Rome concerned over whether to eat meat or resort to a vegetarian diet for conscience sake.

Especially Gentiles who formerly were idolaters might adopt a vegetarian diet to avoid eating meat that may have been dedicated to idols. For some of them, if they ate such meat, they would remember how they worshipped idols and their consciences would condemn them.

Jewish Christians, aware that some of the meat in the markets may have been dedicated to idols, would doubtless be equally wary of such meat for the same reason. In addition, Jewish Christians who still followed the dietary rules they formerly practiced under Judaism and Jewish tradition might reject food that they suspected was not *kosher*. The apostle Peter was such a Jewish Christian.

I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. (Acts 11:5-8)

Irrespective of whether the animal were ceremonially clean under Judaism, even improper bleeding of the meat made it unacceptable to Jews and Christians.

But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. (Acts 15:20; see also Acts 15:29; 21:25)

As Romans 14 begins, the weaker conscience appears to be a Gentile Christian who may have been formerly an idolater. (See 1 Corinthians 8:1-13.) Verses two and three introduce a concern regarding what one may or may not eat and be pleasing to God. Verses 6, 15, 17, 20-21 continue to refer to the question of eating. However, references in verse 5-6 to special days are reminiscent of a problem noted among Jewish Christians (Colossians 2:16-17).

In addition, references to “clean” and “unclean” in verse 14 concur with references to issues affecting some Jewish Christians in the first century. Then, references to food and drink, too, could apply to Jewish Christians (“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink...” Colossians 2:16).

The apostle Paul, by inspiration, permitted Christians to hold private opinions, disallowed the elevation of opinions to the level of doctrine and instructed the Roman Christians to demonstrate compassion by not unnecessarily offending the consciences of brethren. In addition, Christians in Rome were forbidden from judging their brethren regarding these opinions.

Further, the *King James Version* in verse 15 refers to eating “meat” which is a translation of a Greek word for food. In verse 17, food is categorized as “meat and drink.” Verse 20 refers to food as “meat” and what one “eateth.” In verse 21, the food is described as “eat flesh” and “drink wine.” Both items were equally offensive for the same reason. Together they represented a unit (i.e., food) in one’s diet, but that unit, inclusive of both “meat” and “wine,” was to be avoided. For whatever reason the “meat” was to be avoided in this context is the same reason for which the “wine” was to be avoided.

The reason to avoid the food under consideration was to prevent offense to the consciences of brethren. The underlying reasons pertained, depending upon the specific individuals under consideration, either: (1) to avoid food dedicated to idols, (2) to avoid non-kosher food, or (3) both of the foregoing.

It is no more necessary for the “wine” in verse 21 to be alcoholic than would it be necessary to suppose the ridiculous that the “meat” was alcoholic. The meat or flesh was something that could, if eaten by a strong brother, because it had been dedicated to idols, prompt a weaker brother also to eat whereby he offended his conscience. The “drink” or “wine” was potentially offensive to the weaker conscience for the same reason, dedication to idols. Irrespective of whether it were fermented or unfermented, the wine under consideration, as a matter of conscience and a matter of expediency, was not to be consumed because of its dedication to idols.

Whether the “wine” in verse 21 were alcoholic or nonalcoholic is irrelevant to the reason for which the “wine” **and the “meat”** were avoided. Therefore, Romans 14:21 falls far short of sufficing as a *proof text for social drinking*.