



News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
(another in a series)

ALCOHOL AND CIGARETTES

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There is abundant evidence that "smoking is a series health hazard." There seems little if any doubt that it is a major contributor to a number of diseases but particularly to emphysema and lung cancer.

The prevalence of lung cancer has increased at an alarming pace. The rate is more than fourteen times what it was thirty-five years ago. There were approximately 53,000 deaths from lung cancer alone in 1968, which is the equivalent of the number killed in World War I.

We approve heartily the efforts of health organizations and of federal and state governments to educate our people concerning the danger of smoking. We do insist, however, that a similar effort is needed regarding the danger of beverage alcohol.

Alcohol is as dangerous, if not more so, than cigarettes. The American Medical Association for the first time in 1967 ranked alcoholism as the third greatest health problem surpassing cancer and exceeded only by heart disease and mental illness. It previously had been ranked fourth.

It is possible that a carefully examination and analysis would produce evidence that alcohol is the number one health problem in the United States. It contributes in many ways to illnesses and problems other than alcoholism. For example, one recent report said that 28 per cent of all male mental patients are alcoholics.

Furthermore, there is the danger on the highway from the drinking driver. The National Safety Council reports that there were 52,500 deaths in a recent year in traffic accidents.

There were an additional 1,900,000 injured.

The report concludes that "drinking may be a factor in as many as half of the fatal motor vehicle accidents." The seriousness of the slaughter on the highways should really sink in on us when we realize that as many are killed in one year on our streets and highways as were killed during World War I and many more than were killed in the Korean War and that have been killed so far in the war in Vietnam.

A study financed by the National Institute of Mental Health was recently released (1967) under the title Alcohol Problems: A Report. It is hoped that the Surgeon General will make a study and release a report comparable in thoroughness and objectivity to the earlier (1964) report on cigarettes.

Packages of cigarettes must carry a warning that smoking may endanger health. Why should not a bottle or a can of beer, wine, or whiskey be required to carry a comparable warning?

There are spot announcements on radio and television sponsored by state health departments about the danger of cigarette smoking. Why not similar warnings about drinking beverage alcohol? An effort is being made to ban cigarette advertising on radio and T.V. Why not a similar movement for alcoholic beverages?

July 14, 1969

Outreach To Be Emphasized
Through Sunday Schools

NASHVILLE (BP)--Outreach will receive greater emphasis through Sunday Schools than ever before if suggested plans of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Sunday School department are used by churches.

Sunday Schools have been considered the major thrust or outreach organization in local Southern Baptist churches. Classes and departments in the churches were given the responsibility for bringing new persons into the membership of the churches, through organized visitation and other means.

As an outgrowth of a recent national conference on outreach, sponsored by the Sunday School department and held in New Orleans, the department has prepared definite plans for motivation and implementation of outreach programs in local churches now, beginning in October 1970 the suggested organizational pattern will further emphasize the place of outreach in the church.

"The consultation confirmed an opinion among many Southern Baptists today that no effort in church growth will be successful without a strong emphasis and thorough effort on personal evangelism through the Sunday School organization. That is what I call a one-to-one type evangelism," said A. V. Washburn, the Sunday School department's secretary.

The conference brought together pastors, educational directors, missionaries, state convention and Home Mission Board representatives and state Sunday School leaders to discuss and determine the successful approaches to outreach in local churches.

A response typical of the participants, came from Taylor Bowers, minister of education, Huffman Baptist Church, Birmingham, who said, "We have no unusual program of gimmicks; we simply stress the importance of locating and contacting prospects and follow the usual rules for Sunday School growth."

According to department secretary Washburn, "materials are being prepared emphasizing the necessity for outreach in the local church. An outreach officer at the general administration level, departmental level and at the class level will become a part of the new Sunday School organization in October 1970. Fifty plans for successful outreach activities will be provided churches through periodicals and administrative materials."

Asked about other plans for the Sunday School in 1970 which specifically relate to a determined thrust for growth, the national leader for Southern Baptist Sunday Schools said, "Special guide books are being prepared on the subject and will be available on October 1, 1970. These will be an adult outreach book containing 25 plans for use in adult outreach in local churches, a youth book containing six plans for reaching youth and two special guide books for the younger ages. These will include one for workers with children and one for workers with preschool children."