

Facts About Increasing Use of Alcohol

THE SURGEON GENERAL of the United States recently said that cigarette smoking is "the most important individual health risk in this country." It kills millions annually.

In the face of demonstrated ill effects of cigarette smoking few would deny that this is a real and expensive hazard. However, many would rank another health problem ahead of tobacco.

That is the widespread and apparently increasing use of alcohol as a beverage.

One of the owners of a major Oklahoma City hotel publicly challenged accuracy of facts about alcoholism and the liquor business used in this column. Facts cited are correct. That bothers liquor dealers with mixed-up motives.

For example, the hotel man said he supports both the liquor-by-the-drink amendment and campaigns against drunken driving. Such a claim is ridiculously ambivalent.

He also denied that dealers want

to persuade Oklahomans to drink more liquor by making it more readily available. If true, "honest" hotels and restaurants would observe present liquor laws voluntarily.

Instead, liquor supporters have produced a study that reports they get away with a million law violations a year.

The letter writer asked for a solution. An obvious one would be for people to abstain from drinking. Many do but others are unable to discipline themselves when confronted with frequent temptations. It is no solution to set up a "liquor filling station" on every corner or six to the block.

The argument offered by liquor amendment supporters that we should legalize more liquor because people drink illegally is so fallacious that it is silly. If followed consistently we would have to repeal all laws because there probably is none that is not violated. We would descend to barbarism.

Harmful effects of alcohol have

been so widely publicized that it is not necessary to recite them. They extend far beyond actual users of alcoholic beverages to their families, their businesses or employment, their friends, and society as a whole. They may be physical, psychological, matrimonial, parental, financial, or moral and degenerative.

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism has said alcohol is a factor in 10 per cent of all deaths in the United States and that one adult drinker in 10 is likely to become an alcoholic or have a drinking problem.

Last year Oklahoma ranked among the top 10 states with alcohol-related health problems and fatalities.

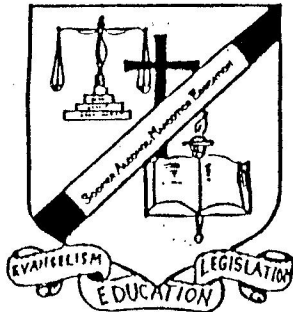
Selfishness and greed are the "honest" reasons why business firms deal in alcohol. They selfishly disregard the well-documented fact that their products can and often do destroy the lives, homes and souls of their customers.

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June 13, 1984

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Your recent articles on Alcohol were so refreshing and encouraging to me and my staff. I have received comments about them from persons all over the state.

I know that at times you must feel like the one lonely flower in an onion patch with every insect in the neighborhood bent on attack. However, right is right and truth is truth. I praise God for you and your stand.

I believe we are going to win this big battle. God bless you in your work.

For the Sake of Souls,


Don W. Chaffin

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