



MICAP RECAP

October 2005



Much has been said about President Bush's faith-based initiatives designed to address problems with alcohol and other drugs in the American society, but there isn't really anything new about the involvement of churches in both a ministry of prevention and a ministry of healing, particularly through their involvement with the Temperance Movement.

Since its beginning as the Anti-Saloon League 102 years ago, America's primary faith-based temperance organization has evolved under the leadership of Dr. Dan Ireland to become the American Council on Alcohol Problems (ACAP), consisting of 30 local temperance organizations, 22 national Christian denominations and other groups that

agree with ACAP's philosophy and goals.

Last month, ACAP held its annual meeting at the historic Mission Inn in Riverside, California, with the Chairman of the American Medical Association Board of Trustees as its keynote speaker. Dr. Duane Cady underscored the importance of ACAP's continuing witness.

Addressing underage drinking as an environmental issue, Dr. Cady cited a study by the Institute for Medicine that concluded that underage drinking costs the American society more than \$53 billion a year, and compared alcohol pollution to air and water pollution, noting that 11 million people under the age of 21 drink.

While some blame parents for being too lax



Dr. Duade Cady

ently. They tell us 'Talk to your kids about alcohol' and 'Drink responsibly.' These messages may be well and good, but this language ignores a simple but vital fact. Given the current alcohol environment in much of America, there's only so much adults can accomplish by talking, because talking goes only so far in a nation where young people are repeatedly bombarded by aggressive and omnipresent advertising and marketing campaigns specifically designed to make alcohol consumption seem glamorous, sexy and fun. Not just to adults. But to kids.

"In fact, children and teens represent one of the industry's most promising emerging and current markets. The illegal consumption of alcohol by youth already accounts for approximately \$22 billion in sales. The alcohol industry wants to get these new consumers as soon as they can to ensure future markets for their products.

"It's clear to me that we need to radically change the current alcohol environment and prevent the alcohol industry from polluting. What's more, that's not just me speaking; it's the American Medical Association.

"We support—and I quote our policy here—'a total statutory prohibition of advertising of all alcoholic beverages except for inside retail or wholesale outlets.'

"That's pretty radical policy, but when you add up the devastation and dollars, it seems to be a pretty rational public health response. And, unlike the alcohol industry, the AMA is not giving lip service to its policies."

with their children, Dr. Cady said the AMA is convinced that a much larger force is at work. "That force is the alcohol industry and the environment it has helped to create for our children and grandchildren," he said.

"The alcohol industry would have us see the problem differ-

Dr. Cady went on to cite examples of how the AMA has worked to prevent liquor advertising on television, and urged the National Collegiate Athletic Association to eliminate alcohol advertising associated with NCAA sports events.

He concluded his remarks to ACAP by outlining actions taken by the AMA at its annual meeting this past June, declaring its commitment to call on state medical societies to advocate for policies such as:

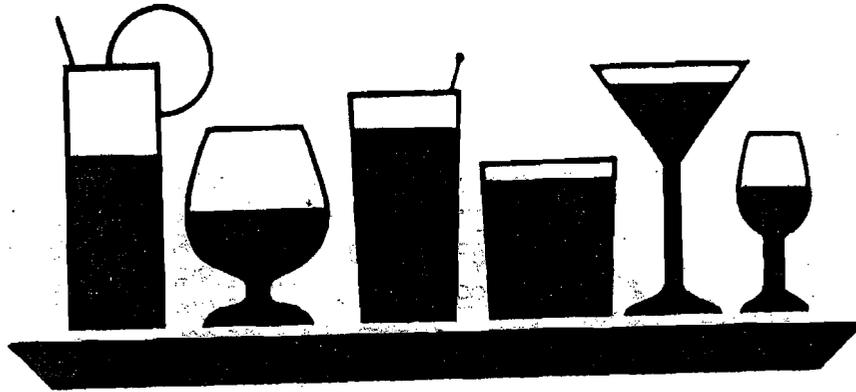
- Raising alcohol taxes
- Increasing government funding for enforcement
- Creating restrictions on alcohol advertising
- Eliminating easy access
- Preventing the alcohol industry from promoting to our kids.

The optimism of the Temperance Movement was reflected not only in presentations given at the 2005 annual meeting of the American Council on Alcohol Problems, but also in comments by executives and board members of the various organizations in attendance at the Mission Inn meetings.

Typical of this upbeat attitude were the comments of United Methodist Bishop Jack Tuell, who said the biggest unreported news story in recent years is that Americans are becoming more interested in healthy lifestyles and less interested in drinking. To illustrate his point, he cited data reflecting a decline in the consumption of beer, wine and liquor in California in recent years.

True, the unreported story about Californians' decline in alcohol consumption is reflected in per capita consumption data for the Drinking Age Population (14 and older) with a decrease from 1990 to 2000 of 16.2% for beer, 14.3% for wine and 25.4% for liquor, which translates to an absolute alcohol consumption decrease of 18.5%.

The drop off may appear more dramatic in California, but the left coast is not the only area where drinking declined during the decade of the 1990s. There were per capita decreases in absolute alcohol consumption in 17 other states besides California, led by Nevada's decline of 19.6%. Actually, there were 18 states where absolute alcohol per capita consumption declined by double-digit figures as shown here:



State	1990-2000 Decline	State	1990-2000 Decline
Alaska	16.9%	Massachusetts	10.8%
Arizona	10.1%	Minnesota	11.0%
California	18.5%	Nevada	19.6%
District of Columbia	11.3%	New Jersey	13.5%
Florida	13.8%	New York	16.5%
Hawaii	13.3%	Vermont	12.8%
Illinois	14.2%	Virginia	10.2%
Kentucky	14.4%	Wisconsin	10.5%
Louisiana	18.6%	USA	11.2%
Maryland	15.5%		

Many churches, particularly those that support the Temperance Movement, urge their members to abstain from alcoholic beverages. As a result, America has one of the highest total abstinence rates in the developed world.

According to the most recent Gallup Poll, 81,253,000 American adults or 37 percent of the population 18 years of age and older are total abstainers, never drinking any amount of alcohol on any occasion.

The rate of abstinence in the United States is three times more than it is among the British and considerably higher than other major European and Scandinavian nations as shown here:

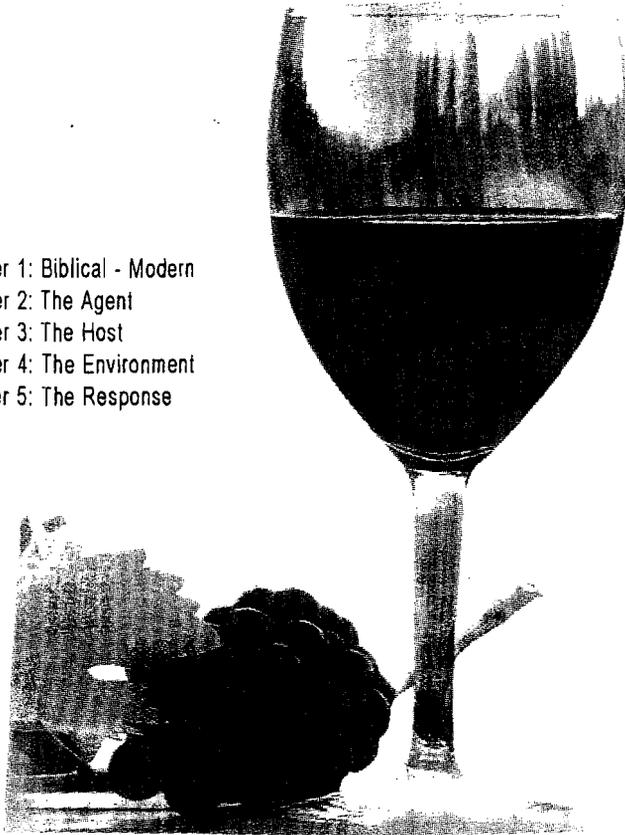
Nation	Abstinence Rate
Denmark	3%
Finland	7%
France	6%
Germany	5%
Ireland	22%
Luxembourg	2%
Norway	6%
Sweden	11%
United Kingdom	12%

Source: World Health Organization

The relatively high rate of total abstinence in Ireland is at least part due to the influence of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the world's largest religious total abstinence society, founded in Dublin, Ireland in 1898 to encourage a pristine lifestyle among Roman Catholics.

Alcohol in the 21st Century

Chapter 1: Biblical - Modern
Chapter 2: The Agent
Chapter 3: The Host
Chapter 4: The Environment
Chapter 5: The Response



The modern-day Temperance Movement comes into focus with a 30-minute DVD produced by Alcohol Research Information Service for the Michigan Council on Alcohol Problems, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

This presentation begins with alcohol

problems in Biblical times and traces it to what society faces in the New Millennium.

Dealing with the issue in the Public Health Model, it discusses the Agent, alcohol, the Host, the drinker and the Environment in which it all takes place, followed by the faith community's response to alcohol problems.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Michigan Council on Alcohol Problems seeks to:

1. Broaden the awareness of the religious community, public officials and the Michigan Public to the destructive consequences of alcohol, other drugs, tobacco and gambling, and offer positive solutions.
2. Educate the Michigan Public for responsible controls in the areas of alcohol, other drugs, tobacco and gambling, and
3. Alert and mobilize supporters to any public policy changes related to MICAP's mission.