

Statement on Chemical Use, Abuse and Dependency

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, officially organized in 1863, early in its history addressed the use of beverage alcohol and tobacco. The Church condemned the use of both as destructive to life, family, and spirituality. She adopted, in practice, a definition of temperance which urged "total abstinence from that which is injurious, and the careful and judicious use of that which is good."

The position of the Church with respect to the use of alcohol and tobacco has not changed. In recent decades the Church has actively promoted anti-alcohol and anti-drug education within the Church, and united with other agencies to educate the wider community in the prevention of alcoholism and drug dependency. The Church created a "Stop-smoking Program" in the early 1960's which has had a worldwide outreach and helped tens of thousands of smokers to quit. Originally known as the "Five-Day Plan" to stop smoking, it may well be the most successful of all cessation programs.

The creation of hundreds of new drugs in laboratories, and the rediscovery and popularization of age-old natural chemicals, such as marijuana and cocaine, have now gravely complicated a once comparatively simple problem and pose an ever-increasing challenge to both the Church and society. In a society which tolerates and even promotes drug use, addiction is a growing menace.

Redoubling its efforts in the field of the prevention of dependency, the Church is developing new curricula for its schools and support programs to assist youth to remain abstinent.

The Church is also seeking to be an influential voice in calling the attention of the media, public officials, and legislators to the damage society is suffering through continued promotion and distribution of alcohol and tobacco.

The church continues to believe that Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 6:19,20 is applicable today, that "Our bodies are the Temple of the Holy Ghost" and we "should glorify God" in our bodies. We belong to God, we are witnesses to His Grace. We must endeavour to be at our best, physically and mentally, in order that we may enjoy His fellowship and glorify His name.

This public statement was released by the General Conference president, Neal C. Wilson, after consultation with the 16 world vice presidents of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, on July 5, 1990, at the General Conference session in Indianapolis, Indiana.