

The Blight of Beverage Alcohol

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The news media are constantly informing us of the terrible results of drunkenness. Over a recent holiday season several state officials issued frequent reminders that drunken drivers are the chief culprits in highway fatalities. Hardly a week goes by but that we are bombarded with fresh statistics about the alarming fruits of drinking and drunkenness.

In case you have missed them, I will cite just a few. Each year alcohol kills 30,000 on our streets and highways, is responsible for 22% of mental hospital admissions, is involved in 75% of all domestic court cases (family squabbles) and is involved in 55% of all arrests. The cost to our nation associated with the misuse of alcohol is now estimated at \$25 billion a year. Excessive drinking has been implicated in the development of some types of cancer. It has been proved that eight out of ten babies born to alcoholic mothers are likely to have some kind of birth defect. There are 9 million known alcoholics in America and many more problem drinkers.

The most significant increases in drinking are being registered among the youth of our land. A 1974 study shows that 63% of the boys and 54% of the girls in the 7th grade have had a drink. By the 12th grade, according to this study, 93% of the boys and 87% of the girls had drunk some kind of alcohol. A report prepared by the HEW reveals that a substantial percentage of teen-agers drink, that about 5% of the American students have already become problem drinkers and that about 23% show signs of potential drinking problems by getting drunk 4 times or more in a year. If you think none of this goes on in your community, just ask one of the high school teachers or students!

Ironically, the warnings about drunk driving during the holidays were completely overshadowed by the liquor commercials. In spite of all of the ugly evidence of suffering, sorrow and depravity there are some in every "dry" county who will sing the praises of liquor to high heaven and will not rest till it is brought into the marketplace legally. Also, it is very ironic that any true Christian would want to touch the stuff with a ten-foot pole, much less in any way defend consumption of this chemical and social poison.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, August 27, 1987, of which I was editor.]

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