

## AA – ALCOHOL AND ADVERTISING

### Summary of main points

There's a positive side to alcohol – but also a downside.

There's a strong proven link between alcohol consumption and criminal behaviour, particularly violent crime.

Alcohol contributes to a quarter of all road deaths, and nearly a quarter of all injuries treated in hospital.

Deaths which can be attributed wholly to alcohol are not uncommon – more than 160 per year.

The misuse of alcohol can have a detrimental effect on families and neighbourhoods.

*What* we are drinking is changing – consumption of 'ready to drink' (RTD) beverages is on the rise, while consumption of wine, beer and spirits is falling.

*How* we are drinking is changing – we now drink in many more public places and at many more events than before. Binge drinking – drinking until one becomes drunk - has become accepted as normal.

*Who* is drinking is changing – the quantity of alcohol drunk by young people, particularly young women, has escalated.

Alcohol is now much cheaper, and much more readily available, than before.

A massive amount of money is spent on advertising, with many adverts suggesting that alcohol can transform one's life.

Churches are now much more relaxed about drinking than they were. Few would want to see a return to a 'temperance' stance.

Churches can help towards the rehabilitation of people with alcohol issues and assisting those dealing with addiction.

Churches have an important role to play in building community – in the way that pubs do!

## Questions to consider

1. Do you think that cutting our consumption of alcohol would help towards reducing our crime figures?
2. Is enough being done to make us aware of the health risks attached to drinking alcohol?
3. Has alcohol become 'normalized' – i.e. something we now expect to see at all kinds of events and in all kinds of places? Is that a good thing or a bad thing?
4. Why do you think binge drinking has become so popular?
5. Do you agree that we now see it as 'normal' that people drink just to get drunk?
6. Do you think that lowering the legal age for drinking alcohol from 20 to 18 was a good thing? Should it be raised again?
7. Should we be alarmed that young women are now drinking heavily, as well as young men?
8. If alcohol were discovered now it would be categorized as a Class II drug: should it therefore be criminalized like cannabis, marijuana and 'P'?
9. How can we get the balance right between an individual's right to choose to drink, and the responsibility of government to protect the health and well-being of society?
10. Do you think that the number and range of outlets selling alcohol should be reduced?
11. Does advertising encourage people to drink, or simply help them to make informed 'consumer choices'? Why have we banned adverts related to smoking but not drinking?
12. Why does New Zealand have a drinking problem?
13. Is the 'drinking culture' in New Zealand symptomatic of a deeper issue?
14. What do you think is the appropriate role for drink in our society?
15. Do we need a new temperance movement?
16. Has the church been sucked into the 'alcohol' culture? Should our attitude be different?
17. Has your church done much thinking about this issue? Should it?
18. Are you happy about having alcohol at church events?
19. What do you think the churches should be saying – and doing – about this issue?
20. Is your church actively helping people with alcohol issues? If yes, could it do more? If no, could this become part of your church's ministry?