

HealthWorks

A newsletter published by the Health Ministries Department of the North American Division

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2003 National Conference on Tobacco or Health

I just returned from a very exciting meeting. Around three thousand three hundred people from all around the world converged on Boston, Massachusetts, from December 10 to 12 to participate in the largest and most comprehensive national conference on tobacco control. This trend-setting conference brought together leaders in health, government, business and industry, advocacy, communications and education. Participants got a chance to work together, share information and ideas, and develop and enhance networks. The common goal: reducing tobacco use in America.

The opening plenary session featured Thomas Menino, Mayor of Boston, who shared with the delegates how the new completely smoke-free city of Boston was prospering after the ban. Many people felt that business would suffer and tourists would stay away if they were not allowed to smoke in bars. But to the contrary, business has been prospering! "Our city smells better, feels better and *is* better since this total ban," said Mayor Menino.

There must have been hundreds of sessions organized under seven program areas:

- ① Tobacco-Use Prevention Among Youth.
- ② Cessation, Nicotine and the Science of Addiction.
- ③ Public Policy and Advocacy Strategies.
- ④ Increasing Diversity/Eliminating Disparities.
- ⑤ Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs or Combined Strategies.
- ⑥ Media and Communications Strategies; and
- ⑦ Evaluation and Surveillance.

Thankfully we were given a book that listed the learner objectives and an abstract of each presentation so that we could select the seminars that would be most helpful to our interest.

Roundtable discussions of five to seven participants were held before the conference in the morning, and at noon and in the evening to provide participants an opportunity to ask questions of speakers and to network. I found these intimate meetings very helpful. There was also an opportunity to schedule an appointment for a consultation with one of the many experts.

The exhibit hall was a wonderful bonus. They showcased the latest products and services available to tobacco control professionals. I got so many helpful books and manuals and pamphlets that I had to get a new suitcase to carry them in. I could not throw any of the information away. My only regret was that I didn't see a booth for *Listen and Winner*, our own temperance magazines, and *Health Connection*, our health resource people.

You can still go to the online program and look at the abstracts, and download many of the handouts and PowerPoint presentations. I downloaded more than a dozen excellent power point presentations of sessions that I didn't have opportunity to attend but still had an interest. You can go to the web site (www.tobaccocontrolconference.org) and download anything of interest. It is a wonderful source of information!

by DeWitt S. Williams, EdD MPH CHES, Director
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The Good.

THE BAD.

THE UGLY.

Do you remember the Master Settlement Agreement? In 1998 a settlement was reached with the major U. S. tobacco manufacturers to help 46 states defray the health-related costs of tobacco. Over a 25-year period these states would get around \$245 billion to deal with tobacco-related issues. What has happened since 1998? What have these states done with that money?

First, the good news. Ten years ago only one state had a comprehensive tobacco program. Six years ago only three had a comprehensive tobacco program. Today, 19 states are spending more than 50% of the minimum recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. In addition, tobacco excise taxes are sweeping the country. Twenty-eight states plus the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico have implemented or passed tax increases on cigarettes since the beginning of 2002. And statistics show that with each tax increase smoking drops. Most states now have 800 number quitlines that provide counseling and help for the smoker.

The percentage of the population covered by Clean Indoor Air legislation has more than doubled in the past 18 months. More than 25% of the population can go into smoke-free restaurants, work places and public places, and not have to worry about smoke getting in their eyes. New laws have been implemented in New York State, New York City, Boston, Delaware, Florida, El Paso and Dallas. I just visited Dayton, Ohio to meet with an interfaith coalition there that will try to sensitize the citizens about the benefits of a smoke-free city. I also called my friend, the mayor of Philadelphia to see what we can do to get the ball rolling to make my hometown a smoke-free city. A grassroots movement is swelling as more and more people are persuaded to work in tobacco control.

Now for some bad news. Fifteen states cut some \$200 million from tobacco prevention in fiscal year 2003, including some of the model programs. In FY2003 only four states funded tobacco prevention at CDC minimum levels. Many of our states are using their tobacco money to fix roads and balance budgets while about 46 million adults and four million teens are still smoking. That's bad news to me. We need all of that money to fight tobacco. Only in America do sick people walk all the way to the back of a pharmacy to get their prescriptions filled, while healthy people can buy cigarettes right up at the front.

The ugly is knowing that the tobacco companies are still marketing cigarettes to kids and still opposing real policy changes. They are still lying about their products and introducing new ones. They are still attacking real tobacco control programs and promoting phony ones. Those sympathetic ads you see on television are just crocodile tears. Take a second look at their ad "Think; Don't Smoke." What a phony! They are suing California and the American Legacy Foundation and threatening the Utah and Florida



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programs. When teens were asked "Have you seen any ads for cigarettes or spit tobacco in the past two weeks?" fifty-eight percent said "yes." How could teens avoid tobacco ads? Cigarettes are still being advertised in *Sports Illustrated* (which has a readership of more than three million young people), *People* magazine and other journals and papers.

One of the ugliest things that I see is that Adventists are just about out of the tobacco issue. Our Five Day Plan and Breathe Free stop smoking program used to be mentioned with all of the others. We don't get mentioned anymore. We have just about been overshadowed and put out of business.

We need a web page and a hotline. We need to be involved in all of the state committees. We need new commitments and a new vision. We should be at the forefront of this important temperance issue.

A new year is beginning. Won't you get involved? Won't you help? Why not contact your state tobacco coalition and ask what you can do? Why not write a letter and urge your state to be honest with that money they have been granted? Keep your church's Health Ministry in your prayers and let's be a part of the "good" again.

Nobody Should Smoke

by John Rivera, *Baltimore Sun*

A coalition of religious leaders representing Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans and others lent their support to an initiative that aims to curb teen smoking by raising the state tax on cigarettes \$1.50 a pack.

The broad-based support of the members of the Central Maryland Ecumenical Council is considered significant because, while individual religious denominations may have discouraged smoking among their members, they have not been in the forefront of the legal and political anti-smoking movement.

The initiative was endorsed at a news conference yesterday. "It is a groundbreaking step," said United Methodist Bishop, Felton Edwin May of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, which passed a resolution at its annual meeting last month endorsing the initiative. "It shows cohesiveness and collaboration at a level that would move this issue ahead. None of us as individuals or as denominations can do it alone." May noted that Methodists have long discouraged tobacco use, and as early as 1918, required applicants for ministry to abstain from its use.

His colleague, Lutheran Bishop George Mocko, said that his denomination had no such reluctance. "Nobody should smoke. Not children, not teen-agers, not adults," he said. "Now it may seem strange to have a Lutheran standing up here saying this because we have been known for years as having a lot of fun, making fun of Baptists and Methodists for spending so much time for getting exercised on this subject.

We were wrong

"Well, on smoking we were wrong and they were right," he said. "It comes down to the proper stewardship of our bodies."

The Rev. Sidney Daniels, representing a coalition of Baltimore's African-American clergy, said the initiative's goal to reduce smoking among youth "lay hold of a basic principle: Children should not be influenced to do the wrong thing, to contaminate their bodies, destroy their lives, to make profit for the death dealers who are selling cigarettes."

Vincent DeMarco, executive director of the initiative, said the ministers joined a group of more than 290 state and local organizations that have endorsed the tobacco tax increase. Demarco said every candidate for the General Assembly is being asked to endorse the \$1.50-per-pack cigarette tax increase, and his organization will publicize which candidates agree to support it and which don't.

Brendan McCormick, spokesman for Philip Morris USA Inc., the nation's largest tobacco company, called the proposal "nothing more than a thinly veiled attempt to raise taxes at a time when the state has a 317 million-budget surplus."

"Given that the issue is youth smoking, Philip Morris strongly supports efforts to keep tobacco products out of the hands of kids. However, this is about raising taxes. It is not about youth smoking," he said.



Richard Daynard, a Boston law professor and chairman of the Tobacco Products Liability Project, said that as far as he is aware, the involvement of religious groups in the anti-tobacco movement has been limited to resolutions passed in annual conventions and the divestment of tobacco stock by many denominations.

Addressing specifics

"In general, they have not been on the front lines of specific tobacco control initiatives, with the exception of divestment," he said. "So I think it's very important they're coming out and not just saying 'In general, one ought to do something,' but saying specifically these things should be done and should be done by our legislature and should be done this year."

John F. Banzhaf III, executive director of Action on Smoking and Health, called the coalition's support for the tobacco increase "a breakthrough."

Up until now, "there have been sporadic involvements" in the anti-smoking movement by religious groups, most notably the Seventh-day Adventists and the Mormon Church. Otherwise, he said, "in terms of a religious organization using its might or strongly proselytizing [against smoking], I'm not aware of much of that."

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Share the Wealth Health

CREATION Health

Secrets to Feeling Fit and Living Long

A book by Des Cummings, Jr., PhD with Monica P. Reed, M.D.

A recent study of 855 high school seniors revealed that students who go to church are less likely to become delinquents, drink alcohol or use marijuana than other adolescents. This is an observation that applied to both boys and girls. And the scientific data keeps coming. Georgetown University Medical School professor, Dale Matthews, and his colleagues have shown that

religious involvement helps people avoid illness, recover from it more quickly, and, most remarkably, live longer. That's good news, isn't it? But are you surprised? No, because we have heard these truths for a long time.

Combining personal stories and the latest medical research, this book introduces readers to eight powerful secrets for improving their health. Using the acronym CREATION, the authors share God's original plan for His children to enjoy a lifetime of health and happiness.

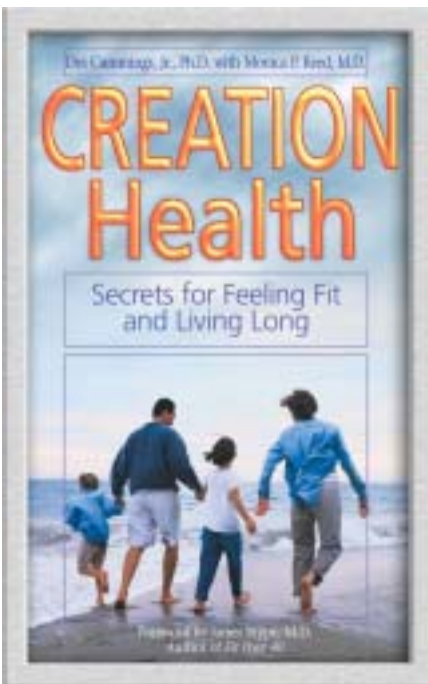
CREATION Health is the 2004 *Sharing Book of the Year*. The Review and Herald is proud to announce the launch of project Share 10, a challenge to every Adventist member to share 10 books with people in their community.

The health message is the right arm of the gospel and the entering wedge for reaching the hearts of people. Reading this book will help readers to embrace this formula with a lifetime of happiness, good health, balance and joy!

You can find this book at your local Adventist Book Center for \$2.49. It is also available at the ABC's website, www.AdventistBookCenter.com. Purchase many copies and share the health!

**American Smokeout
November 18, 2004**

Since 1977, the **Great American Smokeout**, sponsored by the American Cancer Society has challenged Americans to quit smoking for at least a day and fueled a cultural revolution against tobacco. The third Thursday in November (November 18, 2004) is your opportunity to get involved with this venture in your community.



Each year one book is priced reasonably and designated as the "Sharing Book of the Year." CREATION Health is the book to share in 2004.

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