

Sermon Printed Upon Request

# God or Grass?

(The following sermon was preached in the College Chapel by the Reverend Wright Doyle, Pastor, St. Barnabas' Episcopal Church, on September 15. It is being reproduced for "Smoke Signals" upon the request of some members of the student body.)

When I was trying to decide what to talk to you about today, I first thought of telling you about the wonderful entertainment opportunities available here in the Greater Murfreesboro Metropolitan Area, sometimes called the "fun capital of the world." But, then I realized that that would take 15 seconds at the most. Therefore, I decided to address myself to an activity that is spreading like wildfire and growing like a weed.

Today I want to talk to you about smoking pot. There are not many rational things being said about this drug and its use. I would like to speak my mind on this vital subject, in the hope of giving you what I think is the Christian point of view. Rap later at Purgatory (the coffeehouse sponsored by St. Barnabas' Church).

Here is my point in a nutshell: smoking pot is wrong, because it is "idolatry." What do we worship, God or grass? Where do we get our pleasure, our purpose, our power for life? Where do we find the truth? Where do we find true peace? Where do we find the abundant life? What offers us real life, God or a weed?

To smoke pot is to settle for less than second best. It is to miss out on what life could be like. You have a life to live, and pot has nothing to give. It is Jesus who gives the abundant life. It is Jesus who shows us the truth and the way. It is Jesus who justifies us and imparts meaning to our lives. And it is Jesus who infuses us with his Holy Spirit, so that we can love God and men.

To look for life in a joint is like trying to gain Olympic strength and ability in a bowl of Wheaties.

To believe the claims that are made for pot is just as ridiculous as believing that you will win the Miss America pageant if you use Ultra Brite!

Now, I shall give you two arguments against the use of pot from a Christian point of view: First, smoking pot is wrong because "getting intoxicated" is wrong. Although the Bible nowhere condemns moderate drinking of alcohol, from one end to the other, it prohibits drunkenness. Getting high is wrong, unless you get high on the Spirit of Christ.

Jesus said: "Take heed to yourselves lest your heart be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the cares of this life, and the day of judgment come upon you suddenly like a snare; for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the earth. But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Paul warned the Ephesians: "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the spirit. . . always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In both of these passages, drunkenness is condemned because it keeps us from living the life we were made to enjoy. It is wrong to be intoxicated, because then we aren't able to know God fully and properly. God is the God of sobriety, of truth and rational thinking, as well as of elevated emotions. He wants us to know him with our minds, and we can't do that if our minds are darkened and our judgment is impaired. We can't understand the "Bible," which is God's word to us, unless we are in full possession of our judgment and reason.

Intoxication is wrong also because it keeps us from "praying" to God. In order to communicate with the Lord we have to be alert and in control of our minds. And prayer is our chief link with our Creator.

God wants us to keep sober because, thirdly, we must be sober to find out what his will is for us; how we are to serve him? How are we to love our fellow man and do good works for him, if we can't accurately perceive what God wants us to do and how to do it?

Finally, intoxication is wrong because God wants us to be intoxicated with his Spirit, and nothing else. I shall return to this later.

I have heard many pot smokers object at this point: "But grass isn't intoxicating like alcohol. We

aren't drunk when we are smoking it." I dispute that claim for these reasons.

The National Institute of Mental Health has published a pamphlet giving the results of the latest research on marijuana. Listen to what this cautious document says: "It has no known use in medicine. It is used mainly for its intoxicating effects. . . It acts on the brain and nervous system. It affects the user's mood and thinking. Users may get talkative, loud, unsteady, or drowsy, and find it hard to coordinate their movements. . . A person using marijuana finds it harder to make decisions that require clear thinking. And he finds himself more easily open to other people's suggestions. Doing any task that takes good reflexes and thinking is affected by the drug. For this reason it is dangerous to drive while under the influence of the drug." The report goes on to say that, according to the size of the dosage, the effects range from elation to panic, and may include hallucinations, illusions, and delusions.

What do people call this experience when they're talking about it casually? They say, "I got high on grass." Or, "I got stoned on pot." High, stoned, intoxicated. Intoxication is wrong.

Now, I must move to the second argument against the use of pot. Not only does God forbid getting intoxicated on anything but the Holy Spirit, but to disobey God in this matter is to miss out on the greatest experience of life?

What does Paul mean by being filled with the Spirit? Let's see. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of Jesus. To be filled with the Spirit is to have Jesus living in you and working wonderful things inside your life.

Pot smokers say that the weed makes them see things more clearly. But Jesus himself is the "truth," he is the "light" of the world. Pot may give you a sharper sense of colors, but knowing Jesus gives you a sharper sense of who you are. What is the meaning of life? How do we find the abundant life? Jesus answers these questions, and many more. Pot can't.

Pot smokers tell me that grass gives them peace of mind and release from (tensions). The problem is, this peace is shallow and temporary. Jesus brings deep and abiding peace. The most dangerous enemy of peace of mind is guilt: we do things we shouldn't do, and our conscience tells us we're no good. Jesus tells us that we are truly guilty, but he has died for us. He has taken our penalty upon himself. For those who repent of their sins and trust in the cross of Christ, there is peace with God; and peace with God means peace of mind, forever.

Another threat to tranquility of heart is fear of the future. But when we are convinced that Christ has died for us, and we know that he is alive from the grave and will raise us up at the last day, and fear of the future is gone. Jesus told his disciples: "In the world you have tribulation. Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world."

Pot smokers usually tell us that their lives have little purpose or meaning, except to go on getting high, and enjoying the colors and the music. But Jesus gives all his true disciples real purpose. He is the Lord of history. To know him is to love him; to love him is to serve him; to serve him is to tell others about the life Christ brings, and to love them and do all we can for their welfare. Jesus has died for us, so that whether we live or die, we do it for him. He is our goal and our purpose in life.

Jesus gives his disciples power. People high on LSD and Speed — and sometimes pot — think they can do anything. Art Linkletter's daughter thought she could fly out of a window. But Jesus transmits "real power:" power over fear, power over anger, power over selfishness, power to love others and to forgive them. Jesus gives us power to endure troubles with patience and joy. That's real power!

Pot smokers claim that the weed gives them love for others. Sure, it makes you more tolerant of irritations, just as a tranquilizer will. If you get a few thousand people together on pot for a day or two, you can prevent a riot by putting them under sedation, which is what pot does. But absence of conflict is not love.

Jesus brings real love. True love says: "Okay, you irritate me, and you do things I don't like, but through Christ's Spirit I freely forgive you." Jesus loved the unlovable. By his spirit his disciples forgive their enemies and go out of their way to inconvenience themselves for others' welfare. Charity is almost unknown in the Oriental world.

Charity on a large scale was invented by the Christian Church. "In this is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be an offering for our sins." When this God puts the Spirit of his Son into your life, then you begin to imitate Jesus, although never perfectly.

Finally, Jesus offers life. He offers freedom from basic anxieties: from guilt, fear, and hatred, here, in this life. He offers a relationship with God that never fails and never disappoints. Jesus is alive, now, in heaven. He will take all his true disciples and make them alive too, after they have lain dead in a cold grave. Jesus created all in life. Jesus makes this sorry existence worthwhile. Jesus promises to give eternal life to all who trust him and follow him faithfully. The ultimate high is heaven. The colors, the music, and the friendship of a dark smoke-filled room littered with isolated bodies is nothing compared to the beauty and the glory and the splendor and majesty and eternal bliss of being with Jesus forever.

What will you worship? The Creator or one of his creatures? Which will it be: God, or grass? Christ, or pot? Life or death? There is no compromise.



Ah, Sweet Victory!

Fans carry Coach James Garrison on their shoulders at the end of the Ferrum-Chowan game. Brave boosters were over-joyed at the 10-6 victory over their arch rival.

## Constitutional Amendments Reviewed

RALEIGH (AP)—A proposed rewrite of North Carolina's Constitution includes some substantive changes, but none that will impair individual rights or shift any of the powers of state and local governments.

The rewrite, or editorial revision, is one of seven amendments to the Constitution which will be put to the voters Nov. 3.

The editorial revision is intended to make the language of the document more understandable and direct and delete sections that are obsolete or contradict the U.S. Constitution.

If passed, it will be the first total revision of the document since it was written in 1868. North Carolina's is the only Re-

construction - era constitution which has not been rewritten at least once.

The revision was proposed in 1968 by the 25-member state Constitution Study Commission initiated by former Gov. Dan K. Moore and headed by former North Carolina Supreme Court Chief Justice Emery B. Denny. The measure went through seven roll-call votes in the 1969 General Assembly with only one vote recorded against it.

No organized opposition has been voiced since.

Among the 40 or more minor substantive changes are:

—The "Declaration of Rights" in Article I was strengthened by the addition of the first state guarantee of freedom of speech, equal protection of the laws and protection from improper discrimination by the state.

Since citizens are already guaranteed these rights by the U.S. Constitution, their inclusion is considered symbolic of the state's recognition of their importance.

—Racial provisions invalidated by the courts and the U.S. Constitution have been eliminated. These include the old provisions forbidding mixed marriages and the Pearsall Amendment inserted in 1957 to skirt public school integration.

—The compulsory school term is lengthened from six to nine months, a goal already accomplished by statute years ago.

—A prohibition has been added against voting or office-holding by anyone convicted of a felony in another state or in federal

court. Presently, the prohibition applies only to those convicted in North Carolina state courts.

—It eliminates possible conflict between the superintendent of public instruction and the Board of Education by making the superintendent chief administrative officer of the board.

—Another provision specifies that local governments assigned by the legislature to share responsibility for financing public education are authorized to finance both public schools and community colleges and technical institutes without a popular vote.

—It makes the lieutenant governor and attorney general ex officio members of the Council of State.

—And it prohibits the exclusion of anyone from jury service on account of sex, race, religion or national origin.

The measure, if approved, would take effect July 1, 1971. Any of the other six amendments that were adopted would

become part of the revised Constitution.



Panther Goes Down

The strong Chowan defensive unit stop a Ferrum halfback at the line of scrimmage in Chowan's 10-6 win over the Panthers.

## No Retiring For Davis

HOLLYWOOD (AP) — Sammy Davis Jr. says he is going into virtual retirement, but a spokesman assures the entertainer's admirers he didn't really mean it.

Davis, 44, told a weekend audience at Seattle, Wash., he planned to quit show business except for one appearance a year because "mentally and physically I've had it."

His Hollywood spokesman said Tuesday Davis actually will cut down to working perhaps 26 weeks a year and won't meet any more three-day commitments.



Rep. Whitehurst is a crowd pleaser

G. William Whitehurst of the 2nd Congressional District, Va. spoke in assembly October 15. His subject varied from his beginnings in politics to his views on the draft. Students indicated that they enjoyed this speaker very much and would like to hear more speakers with his manner of speaking.

## Construction Boom May Have Started

By JOHN CUNIFF  
AP Business Analyst  
NEW YORK (AP) — Judging by a sharp rise in the number of housing permits being issued, the long forecast boom in residential construction may already have begun.

Early this year the rate at which permits were issued dropped to only 90 per cent of the annual rates of more than a decade earlier. By August, this rate had rebounded all the way to 112 per cent of the 1957-1959 average, still low but rising vigorously.

The number of units on which work already has begun also is rising, and although still near or below 1.5 million a year, a reliable study just issued projects a rise to a 1.7 million annual rate in 1971.

This study, by the F.W. Dodge firm, bases its estimate on a growing availability of mortgage money, plus a huge backlog of demand that has built up over the past few years of tight money and high interest rates.

The turnabout was bound to come. Many thousands of young couples—products of the marriage boom that followed World War II—have moved into the housing market.

At the same time, a considerable amount of housing was deteriorating. Estimates by the National Association of Home Builders indicate that one-half of one per cent of exist-

ing housing is demolished each year.

Combine just these two factors with a deep recession in housing construction, the result primarily of a diversion of capital to areas of the economy where higher rates could be earned, and you realize how critical is the shortage.

Another way of measuring the demand is the startling increase in sales of mobile homes. In just one year, from 1968 to 1969, this industry expanded from sales of 318,000 units to nearly 413,000.

There was a clearly understandable reason for this. Mobile homes are inexpensive. With housing prices rising through the roof, they represented the only affordable housing for many people.

Moreover, such homes could be purchased without many of the financial blocks encountered in obtaining conventional home mortgages. Banks were much more favorably inclined to grant short-term loans at high interest rates on mobile homes than long-term mortgages and low rates for conventional homes.

In short, the demand for housing is there, as can be demonstrated in many ways. And now that the construction industry is beginning to attack the problem, many people are inclined to think the worst will be over in a decade.

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