

At War with Alcoholism



The United Methodist Church has long been a proponent of abstinence when it comes to the consumption of alcohol.

During the 1860's, with the country divided and at war, temperance groups were being formed to help combat the personal war being fought by many soldiers returning from battle: *the war with alcoholism*.

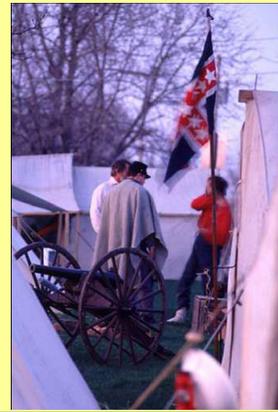
It was within this climate that the General Conference of the Methodist Church met and proceeded to debate an appropriate response to the challenges of alcohol abuse and addiction. Resulting from this debate it was agreed that the church should take a stand supporting abstinence from alcohol.

This decision then posed the question – If the church stands opposed to the use of alcohol, how can it justify the use of alcohol-based wine during the communion service?

More debate on the nature of communion and the use of wine as the “blood of Christ” was undertaken with the conclusion that, in Methodist tradition the elements used during communion are considered symbols of Jesus’ body and blood.



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Therefore, since they are symbols, the wine used does not need to contain alcohol to serve the purpose it was intended for. It was that decision that allowed the Methodist Church to begin searching for a substitute for alcohol-based wine.

The search was concluded when two brothers associated with the church promised to provide to the Methodist Churches the unfermented wine needed for communion during that year. Because of their generosity, the Welch brothers became well-known for their grape juice products and their Welch's grape juice became a favorite substitute for wine both in and outside the church.



The United Methodist Church believes that the best way to combat alcoholism is to stop it before it becomes a problem. It follows through by supporting abstinence from alcohol even in its sacred sacrament.

Alcohol Problems Council : of Wisconsin 

Purpose Statement : “The purpose of the Alcohol Problems Council of Wisconsin is to promote abstinence from alcohol as a granting agency and a clearinghouse to the faith community.”

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If you wish to support our work,
please send contributions to:
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