

WARNING: Your State Should Not Legalize Weed

Yesterday, I visited our local bookstore and was struck by the abundance of magazine covers promoting marijuana. Later, my wife commented that she's received two ads this week for cannabis products, something she's never received before! What's going on?

In case you haven't noticed or are simply distracted by the busyness of life, propaganda promoting marijuana and its legalization is bombarding us. Should we be concerned about something that is celebrated as a "harmless recreational" indulgence that progressive people should embrace excitedly?

Our state newspaper recently ran a prominent piece by a young woman calling for weed to be legalized. Coincidentally, she works for a statewide cannabis advocacy group. Reading her arguments and questionable statistics made me wonder if we should begin distributing marijuana freely since she opines it is so harmless and beneficial!

What follows is my pushback to the propaganda. Feel free to "borrow" any and all my counterpoints for op-eds you can submit, exposing the seductive logic.

Let's Get Serious

"There are three kinds of lies: lies, [expletive] lies and statistics," said Mark Twain. He was pointing out the use of statistics to bolster weak or fallacious arguments. The dope supporter whose article appeared in our newspaper, typical of many, deserved a five-star Pinocchio award for her misleading stats and misguided presentation.

- Recently, I had an in-depth conversation with a police officer formerly on paid leave who has since retired. He

was rehabilitating from a serious injury sustained when he confronted a young man about to commit a crime who was stoned on marijuana. He subsequently assaulted the officer, tearing his rotator cuff. He now faces numerous felony offenses plus decades behind bars, in addition to the impounding of his car containing marijuana and drug paraphernalia.

- Olympic gold-medalist Michael Phelps often appears in the news with his lovely wife and two little boys celebrating his success emerging from rehab and his near-death experience. “Not wanting to be alive anymore” at one point, the champion who smoked marijuana, deceived it would not affect his ability to excel, now swears off any drugs as he encourages youth to emulate his example.
- Close to where I live, a 33-year-old woman was sentenced to 30 years in prison for her reckless driving, which resulted in the death of a teenager helping change his mother’s flat tire. The THP report showed her high on drugs and impaired in her driving ability as she callously fled the scene of the homicide. She’ll now have many decades to ponder her stupidity, recreational drug usage and the devastation it brought her and a grieving family.

With scores of people killed, maimed or disabled for life from drunk driving, especially by young people, do we really want to compound the problem by adding marijuana to the mix? Teens can think they are invincible, and adding a joint can seem innocuous until the tragedy happens, which it does all too frequently.

Contrary to what drug proponents profess, marijuana and other drugs take a toll—eventually, if not immediately. Drugs don’t deliver as advertised. Why do you think they call it “dope?”

Even pot-smoking poster boy Willie Nelson, battling emphysema

and pneumonia four or five times, admits his lungs have gotten “really screwed up.”

In Willie’s own words, “There’s been a lot of talk about marijuana being harmless, but I think it’s a lot more dangerous to the lungs than most dope smokers realize. Especially the strong marijuana that’s around these days. Each year it seems to get a little stronger ... your lungs are not really supposed to breath anything but oxygen–pure, fresh air.”

How about the tragic, premature deaths of both Whitney Houston and Amy Winehouse portrayed in recent documentaries? Both got started on the path to their destruction the exact same way, smoking weed, those “harmless” joints.

Research Studies Should Not Be Ignored

As Sergeant Joe Friday used to say on the TV program *Dragnet*, “Just the facts!” So here they are:

- The United States Drug Enforcement Agency states: “U.S. drug overdose kills more people than traffic accidents and gun incidents.” The total number cited was 46,471! If we could ask these victims how many started on marijuana or maintained their marijuana usage along with other drugs, I wonder how many would hang their heads in regret, wishing they’d never succumbed to the seduction of the Pied Piper’s enticement onto this pernicious path? My best friend growing up started experimenting with recreational drugs when he started college with me. What started as a fun escape spiraled into his premature death in his mid-20s. I carry an ache in my heart to this day from this experience.
- When marijuana proponents glorify drugs and celebrate its “harmless” even “beneficial effect,” they should take heed to the words of an expert, Dr. Ed Gogek, an addiction psychiatrist. He wrote the following in the

uber-liberal *New York Times*:

"I've spent 25 years as a doctor treating drug abusers, and they are con artists ... Marijuana activists are phony scientists. For years they said marijuana is good for glaucoma when it actually worsens it! They said it is not addictive, and this is false! They said it doesn't increase usage among teenagers and all evidence says the opposite... It is not harmless! Youth do worse in school and have two times the dropout rate while marijuana permanently lowers their IQ."

- Joseph Califano, head of the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, declares without qualification that "pot smoking adversely affects motor skills and does serious damage to the brain over the long term." It is a fact that objective studies repeatedly show that regular users find their IQ dropping and all cognitive functions hindered.
- Finally, a recent study from Northwestern University established clearly that teen "potheads" had brain abnormalities related to poor short-term memory performance. Healthy individuals who did not use marijuana scored 37 times better on average than users—not just addicts—who had smoked pot in the past.
- The National Institute of Health makes it clear: "One in six youth who try marijuana before age 18 will either abuse it or will become addicted." Those are dangerous odds, parents. Is this what we want for our children and grandchildren?

What's Happening in Massachusetts?

The state of Massachusetts jumped on the bandwagon to legalize marijuana. After a number of months, a study was done to discover the impact on young people. The results are sobering and startling: Currently, half of youth ages 18–25 have smoked marijuana in the past month.

In the classic film *Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy finally pulled back the curtain and exposed the deceiving mastermind behind the façade. May we do likewise amid celebrities and other pot promoters who glamorize toking up, some under the ruse of the “medical marijuana” argument (which can have some medicinal benefits but it’s not the only alternative).

A little while ago, in the mall where I daily exercise, a middle-aged mother darted from the coffee shop and stammered these words amidst her tears, “They just found my daughter dead!” She proceeded to tell me about her 27-year-old daughter who met a young fellow who influenced her to start smoking dope. Prior to this encounter “she had never been involved with any drugs,” but this was the gateway to her death and her mother’s devastation.

Here’s the deal: Scripture says, “Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools” (Rom. 1:22). People will accuse us of being “fearmongers,” but we must not back down. Let’s winsomely and confidently communicate the truth about this massive deception permeating America today.