

# STAND IN FAITH AGAINST TOBACCO

**“Big Tobacco invested in a machinery of deception resulting in addiction. Scripture teaches that you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. The movement that we are a part of is a movement guided by truth resulting in wellness.”**

- Pastor Kelvin Sauls, Director of Interfaith Communities, Community Health Councils, Los Angeles, California

## KEY POINTS:

- Churches, synagogues, temples, monasteries, mosques, and other houses of worship are natural centers for spiritual, emotional, and physical wellness, and can set an example of **places free from harmful tobacco products and secondhand smoke.**<sup>1</sup>
- **Faith leaders have a powerful voice in their communities.**<sup>2</sup> Adopting strong policies on tobacco for their own institutions is one way faith communities can help move the health of our communities forward.<sup>3</sup>
- Spiritual involvement may be **related to lower rates of tobacco use**, and later start-up of use.<sup>4</sup>
- Young people who say that faith and prayer are important to them may be **more prone to staying smoke-free.**<sup>5</sup>



Despite the gains California has made over the past years in reducing tobacco use, the tobacco industry continues to aggressively market its dangerous products to Californians on social media, in newspapers and magazines, and at the retail counter.

For some, spirituality and faith play a role in keeping people and communities healthy. Tobacco companies have and continue to wage a relentless campaign to addict kids and to keep adults addicted for decades. They spend millions targeting low-income neighborhoods and communities of color, resulting in disease, death and hurt for millions.

Practicing spirituality and faith offers one path toward reducing tobacco's burden of harm.

People of faith can play an important part in countering the tobacco industry's harm and ministering to those hurt, all the while improving the health of our communities. It's time to stand with one another in faith and keep up the fight against the tobacco industry to save lives.

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Tips for Former Smokers. (2021, March 1). *Faith-based organizations (fbos)*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/partners/faith/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/partners/faith/index.html)

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization. (2014). *Tobacco Use and Religion [Fact Sheet]*. WHO-EM/TFI/119/E. Retrieve from: [applications.emro.who.int/docs/Fact\\_Sheet\\_TFI\\_2014\\_EN\\_15322.pdf](http://applications.emro.who.int/docs/Fact_Sheet_TFI_2014_EN_15322.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Crosby, M H. (2000). "Religious challenge by shareholder actions: changing the behaviour of tobacco companies and their allies." *BMJ (Clinical research ed.)* vol. 321,7257 (2000): 375-7. doi:10.1136/bmj.321.7257.375. Retrieved from: [www.bmj.com/content/321/7257/375](http://www.bmj.com/content/321/7257/375)

<sup>4</sup> Weaver, A.J., Flannelly, K.J. & Strock, A.L. (2005). A review of research on the effects of religion on adolescent tobacco use published between 1990 and 2003. *Adolescence*, 40(160), 761-776. Retrieved from: [pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16468670/](http://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16468670/)

<sup>5</sup> Nonnemaker, J., McNeely, C.A. & Blum, R.W. (2006). Public and private domains of religiosity and adolescent smoking transitions. *Social Science and Medicine*, 62(12), 3084-3095. Retrieved from: [pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/14512236/](http://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/14512236/)

