

Christian spirituality as protective factors against drugs and substance abuse by Zimbabwean youths: A case of the Catholic church in Gweru urban.

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Abstract

Drug and alcohol abuse, among adolescents, is a global phenomenon that is not limited to a specific culture or religion. Zimbabwe faces an acute alcohol and drug addiction pandemic. The abuse of drugs by the youths has become a cause for concern and a growing body of research suggests that religion is an important protective factor against drugs and substance abuse; and that religion may help in the rehabilitation of drug addicts by enabling them find meaning, direction and purpose in life. The Catholic Church (in Zimbabwe) has taken a firm stance against substance abuse, in all forms, for centuries. This paper assesses how Christian spirituality can be used as a protective factor against drug and substance abuse. The study uses a qualitative approach, where a case study involving in depth interviews was used. A total of 22 purposively sampled congregants participated in the study. Data was analysed using thematic analysis. Results show that there are so many drugs being abused by most youths. These include marijuana, bronclee, mangemba, cane spirit, PP tablets (blue, white and pink), codeine, Tegu Tegu and ZED. It was discovered that, youths also make drugs out of green geisha, chalk dust, sanitizers, and a combination of orange crush and Cerevita. It was noted that the Catholic church has been at the forefront of promoting spirituality as a way of combating drug and substance abuse among young people. Through its various programs, the church provides guidance and support to young people, helping them develop a sense of purpose, direction, and meaning in their lives. This, in turn, helps reduce the likelihood of drug and substance use. It was concluded that, the church provides counselling and support services to young people struggling with addiction through awareness campaigns, workshops, congresses, meetings among other activities, in order to promote drug and substance abuse awareness. One of the recommendations was that, in order to increase capacity, the Catholic Church is working towards building partnerships and collaborations with other organisations and stakeholders. This involves partnering with the local government, non-profit organisations, and other community groups to expand access to prevention and treatment services.

Keywords: Adolescence, Catholic church, Christianity, Congregation, Drugs, Spirituality, Substance use.

