

The Role of the Church in Curbing Drug and Substance Abuse Among Youths: A Case of Churches in Kapsowar, Elgeyo Marakwet County

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Abstract

The church has a divine role in the transformation of lives and societies. This involves confronting societal issues and applying the biblical message of deliverance. This study examined the role of the church in curbing drug and substance abuse among the youth in Kapsowar, Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. The study used a qualitative research method. Data was collected through interviews and questionnaires administered to sampled clergy and youth leaders. The case study of Kapsowar town churches and the theoretical framework was based on the Pastoral Circle Theory, which assists groups in responding to social issues. The findings indicated that the sampled churches are involved in the prevention measures through diverse initiatives, which include mentorship, preaching and praying, Bible study, recreational activities, rehabilitation and advocacy, and financial support. The study recommended the need for the churches to be consistent and collaborative in their initiatives dealing with drug and substance abuse.

Keywords: Drug and Substance Abuse, Youth and Drug Abuse; NACADA, Churches and Drug Abuse, and Rehabilitation.

Introduction

The world is faced with diverse challenges, including drug and substance abuse. It has been noted that drug and substance abuse is a “global epidemic.”¹ Drug and substance abuse has been reportedly prevalent among young people. According to a survey conducted in 2022 by

¹ Madrine King’endo, “Incidence and Extent of Substance Abuse among Secondary School Students in Nairobi Province, Kenya: Implications for Specialized Intervention” (Thesis, Kenyatta University, 2010), <http://repository.embuni.ac.ke/handle/123456789/1705>, 1.



the Kenyan body National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA), alcohol and cannabis were singled out as the most widely used drugs due to demand and availability. In addition, the report highlighted that cannabis use had doubled over the past five years due to myths, misinformation, and misconceptions. The age group representing youths out of school was identified as vulnerable.² Therefore, this study sought to investigate initiatives of select churches against drug and substance abuse among youths in Kapsowar town.

In the traditional culture, among people living in Kapsowar town (Marakwet people group), alcohol was purposely meant to provide leisure moments for older men. Youths were prohibited from taking alcohol because they were expected to be working and supporting their families. In isolated cases, the youths were traditionally allowed to take a traditional brew called *kipketin*, made from a fermented mixture of honey and water. Another traditional drink, *Busaa*, made from a fermented mixture of maize, water, and sugar, was accepted as a food substitute even though it minimally led to drunkardness. However, *wirki*, a distilled mixture of maize, millet, and sugar, was only preserved for older people, for it led to drunkenness. Russil Durrant and Jo Thakker note that in many cultures, alcohol was regarded as an important nutritional value and was taken in moderation.³ The present reality in this locality is that many young people have been exposed to abuse from a young age, as seen in other Kenyan towns.⁴

Drug and substance abuse poses negative impacts on the (ab)user, the family, and society at large.⁵ Notably, drug and substance abuse affects both the church-going and non-church-going youth. This means the churches are also directly affected by the problem. Therefore, church involvement in support of the government’s 2030 Agenda against drug and substance abuse is paramount. The NACADA’s report confirms,

In churches today, people are struggling with drug use disorders, albeit quietly. The reality is that in the confines of any religious organization, someone is suffering in silence, enslaved to some addictive

² NACADA, “National Survey on the Status of Drugs and Substance Use in Kenya,” Accessed July 30, 2024, <https://nacada.go.ke/>, 6.

³ Russil Durrant and Jo Thakker, *Substance Use and Abuse: Cultural and Historical perspectives* (London: Sage Publications inc, 2003), 14.

⁴ NACADA, “National Survey on the Status of Drugs and Substance Use in Kenya,” Accessed July 30, 2024, <https://nacada.go.ke/>, 6.

⁵ Mim J. Landry, *Understanding Drugs of Abuse: The Processes of Addiction, Treatment, And Recovery*, 1st edition (Amer Psychiatric Pub Inc, 1994)., xv.



substance or behavior. Accepting this reality becomes imperative for leaders to enable religious organizations to take a stand in the fight against substance abuse and addiction.⁶

In its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Kenya's government features eradicating drug and substance abuse as one of its priorities, which calls for strengthening the prevention measures and treatment initiatives.⁷ The government's achievement of this goal earnestly calls for the church's concerted efforts.

Definition of Terms

This section defines the key terms and phrases used in the study.

Drug: Drug comes from the Greek word *pharmakon*.⁸ It refers to any substance that, once ingested, affects the normal functioning of the human body. According to Michael D. Reiter, "Drugs are usually considered to be a substance...that impacts the physiology of the body."⁹ Giancola and Tarter, quoted by Durrant and Thakker, state that "Drug is any substance whether natural or artificial in origin, which when taken into the body in sufficient quantities, exerts a non-negligible effect on a person's perception, cognition, emotion and/behavior."¹⁰ They are regarded as psychoactive drugs/ substances "because of their effects and interference on the normal functioning and structure of the brain and the entire body."¹¹

Drug/ Substance Abuse: Abuse is the act of using either licit or illicit drugs and substances in excessive doses or for unintended purposes. It is the "use of any chemically ridden drug/ substance for wrong/ unintended reason...continued use of a psycho drug despite the knowledge that it is causing a social, spiritual, occupational, psychological, emotional or physiological harm/ problem and interfering with personal wellbeing and welfare of others."¹² Substance abuse occurs "when a person uses a drug beyond its normal purpose or when they develop a pattern of use that necessitates further use and/or difficulties in various areas of

⁶ Simon Mwangi and Judith Twala, "How Religious Leaders Can Help in the Fight Against Drug Abuse in Kenya," Accessed July 30, 2024, <https://nacada.go.ke/how-religious-leaders-can-help-fight-against-drug-abuse-kenya>.

⁷ "NACADA, "Strategic Plan 2023-2027." Accessed August 26, 2024.

⁸ Russil Durrant and Jo Thakker, *Substance Use and Abuse: Cultural and Historical Perspectives* (SAGE, 2003), 23.

⁹ Michael D. Reiter, *Substance Abuse and the Family: Assessment and Treatment*, 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 2019), 6.

¹⁰ Durrant and Thakker, *Substance Use and Abuse.*, 14.

¹¹ Kenneth Macharia Munyua, *Exploring the World of Drugs and Substance Use and Abuse: Facts, Myths and Liability*, 1st ed (Nairobi, Kenya: LifeScope Synergy Enterprises, 2017).1.

¹² Durrant and Thakker, *Substance Use and Abuse.*,1.



their life. Prescription medications can be abused when they are used for symptoms they were not intended or in amounts not prescribed.”¹³

Church: The church refers to the community of God’s people of all ages and all backgrounds called out of the world to belong to God. The apostolic church is described in Acts 2:43–4 as *koinonia*, an intimate community of people having faith in Christ.¹⁴ The New Testament defines the church using metaphors such as the body of Christ with Christ being the head (Rom 12:4–5, 1 Cor 12:12–27, Eph 1:22–23) and the family of God (Jn 1:12–13, 2 Cor 6:18, Eph 2:19–22; 1 Jn 3:1–20).

Youth: According to Article 260 of Kenya’s Constitution, a Youth is between eighteen (18) and thirty-four (34) years old. The African Youth Charter defines youth as aged between 15 and 35. The United Nations defines Youth age as between the ages of 15 and 24.¹⁵ In the church context, a youth is a church member who has transitioned from the teens’ category but is still unmarried.

The Problem Statement

According to the NACADA’s 2022 national survey report on drugs and substance use based on a five-year tracer survey from 2007-2022 in Kenya,

One in every 11 youths aged 15–24 years (632,846) were currently using at least one drug or substance of abuse. One in every 20 youths aged 15–24 years (367,608) were currently using alcohol. One in every 31 youths aged 15 – 24 years (230,130) were currently using tobacco. One in every 28 youths aged 15–24 years (259,954) were currently using khat. One in every 37 youths aged 15–24 years (193,430) were currently using cannabis. One in every 1,000 youths aged 15–24 years (8,328) were currently using prescription drugs. One in every 26 youths aged 15–24 years (267,454) were currently using multiple drugs.¹⁶

Furthermore, it continues to affirm,

The commonly abused drugs and substances in Kenya are alcohol, tobacco, cannabis (bhang), glue, miraa (Khat), and psychotropic substances. The Rapid Situation Assessment report (NACADA, 2017) indicates that 12.2% of persons aged between 15 and 65 are active users of alcohol, with 10.4% of them

¹³ Reiter, *Substance Abuse and the Family*..

¹⁴ Vo Huong Nam, *Digital Media and Youth Discipleship: Pitfalls and Promise* (Langham, 2023).

¹⁵ United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/youth#:~:text=Who%20Are%20the%20Youth%3F,of%2015%20and%2024%20years>.

¹⁶ NACADA, “National Survey on the Status of Drugs and Substance Use in Kenya,” 4.



suffering from alcohol use disorders. This survey also indicates that other substances of abuse included tobacco (8.3%), miraa (4.1%), and cannabis at 1.0%.¹⁷

This study addressed the problem of drug and substance abuse among youths in Kapsowar town and the church’s response to curbing the menace.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is based on the Pastoral Circle Theory developed by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, which aids in responding to social issues. It involves experience, social/cultural analysis, theological reflection, and pastoral planning.¹⁸ Furthermore, Maria Cimperman builds on this theory by proposing four steps into the inquiry: experience, social, reflection, and response action in the analysis.¹⁹ The theory focuses on the following questions: Immersion question- What is happening here? Analysis question- Why is it happening? Reflection question- What does it mean? (through a lens of faith) and Response question- How should we respond?²⁰ The theory’s four-moment circle applies to this study in the following ways:

Immersion

The immersion question asks about what is happening. It looks at the study’s increased cases of drug and substance abuse among the youth.

Analysis

The question of why it is happening highlights diverse factors such as peer pressure, prevalent poverty and unemployment rates, lack of parental and spiritual guidance, and curiosity, among other factors. However, all the mentioned influence factors can be attributed to the human sin influence in the abusers’ lives, which drives them to sin in as much as they may not want to displease God (Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5, 58:3; Eccl 7:20; Rom 3:23, 5:12, 7:15–25,).

Reflection

¹⁷ NACADA, “National Survey on the Status of Drugs and Substance Use in Kenya,” 6.

¹⁸ Joe Holland and Peter J. Henriot, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* (Orbis Books, 1983), 7-10.

¹⁹ Maria Cimperman and Peter Henriot, *Social Analysis for the 21st Century: How Faith Becomes Action* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2015).

²⁰ Glenn Packiam, *Worship and the World to Come: Exploring Christian Hope in Contemporary Worship* (IVP Academic, 2020), 15.



The reflection question of what it means looks at it through the lens of faith, then theologically. Drug and substance abuse is a sinful act before the holy God, meaning it defiles the image and the likeness of God in humans (Gen 1:27). The sin hinders the abusers from the presence of God (Isa 59:2) and leads to eternal death (Rom 5:12, 6:23). It leads to other problems like loss of employment, child custody, fines and imprisonment, and social stigmatization.²¹

Response

The response question focuses on how to respond to the issue. The churches and the victims of abuse have a role to play in arriving at a solution. For churches, they can initiate relevant programs that prevent and or rehabilitate the victims of drug and substance abuse. Spiritual programs can help the victims acknowledge their helplessness and despair and come to God for help, meaning, and significance. The church should show unconditional love to the victims of drug abuse, “Love is not an optional extra to a church. Where there is love, the Lord is pleased. Where there is no love, the Lord is offended... God wants His church to manifest His love.”²² The rehabilitation programs help to walk back the harmful effects of drugs.

Equally, the victims need to respond to the call of God by recognizing their inadequacy and God’s sufficiency to help them overcome the problem and bring them to salvation. This eventually should lead to repentance and faith in Christ, “When we become conscious of sin, especially as it is brought before our eyes, through the regular teaching of God’s word, we should not hide or deny the sin. Rather, we should confess it in genuine repentance of heart.”²³

Strategies by Churches against Drug and Substance Abuse

The Role of the Church

The churches have a divine role in curbing drug and substance abuse among youths with the ultimate purpose for them to worship and glorify God (1 Chron 16:29). God is glorified when the lives of the abusers get transformed through the gospel. Apostle Paul states, “For it is by

²¹ Martin M. Antony and David H. Barlow, *Handbook of Assessment and Treatment Planning for Psychological Disorders* (New York: Guilford Press, 2020), 494.

²² Conrad Mbewe and Glenn Lyons, *God’s Design for the Church: A Guide for African Pastors and Ministry Leaders*, Illustrated edition (Crossway, 2020), 34.

²³ Mbewe and Lyons. 257.



grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. (Eph 2:8–9 NIV), He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. The church can guide the youth on the right path through preaching, evangelism, discipleship, mentorship, and counseling. As God’s people, the church has a role to be the salt and light of the world (Matt 5:13–15). Believers have been entrusted with spiritual gifts for the edification of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27–28; 1 Pet. 4:10). These gifts should also be used to reach out to young people imprisoned by drug and substance abuse.

For example, church members gifted with the teaching gift are obliged to teach drug and substance abusers the realities of the menace in their lives, as well as the call of God to salvation. Those gifted with guidance should warn the abusers and guide them in the pursuit of godliness that leads to honoring their God-given bodies. Thus, the church should reach out and advocate for godly principles among drug and substance abusers. This can be done through evangelism and discipleship, counseling, financial support, collaborations with relevant stakeholders, prayers, and rehabilitation. Below are programs that churches can consider.

Evangelism and Discipleship

Evangelism is the act of proclaiming the good news about Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8, Mark 16:15, Rom 10:14), while discipleship is the act of empowering the new believers in Christ with God’s word, with the help of the Holy Spirit that they may grow in their spiritual faith. Evangelism and discipleship programs are inseparable, but discipleship comes after evangelism.²⁴

Through evangelistic and discipleship programs, youths abusing drugs and substances are reminded of the three enemies driving them to sin. They include the world, the flesh, and the devil. The world is under the rule of the devil (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, 2 Cor 4:4). Apostle John writes, “We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one” (1 John 5:19 NIV). The world is seen to oppose God, but Jesus came to redeem God’s people. Second, the devil is the enemy whose mission is to steal, destroy and kill a believer (John 10:10). In the Bible, the devil is referred to using various names such as Satan, the evil one, the god of this world (2 Cor 4:4), and likened to a roaring

²⁴ Roy T. Edgemon, “Evangelism and Discipleship,” *Review & Expositor* 77, no. 4 (1980): 539–47.



lion who prowls around seeking someone to devour (1 Pet 5:8). Nevertheless, the good news is that despite his hostility towards God’s people the devil is eternally defeated by Christ through His death and resurrection. The third enemy that must be overcome is the flesh enemy (Matt 16:17, 26: 41, John 3:6; 6:63). These three are in a constant fight to lure the youths towards drug and substance abuse. Evangelism and discipleship deepen the youth’s understanding of the most fundamental truths of Scripture. Sharing the gospel with drug abusers helps them to grasp the truths about God, such as His holiness, love, and patience on a sinner, His call to repentance, and a perfect plan of prosperity. In Matthew 22:37–39, Jesus instructs on the love of God and love for neighbor—in this research context, a drug and substance youth abuser.

The drug and substance abuse converts should be spiritually empowered with God’s word through catechism, preaching, Bible studies, and seminars, among other learning avenues in the churches’ programs. This will ensure that they grow in their faith in God and live victorious amidst worldly temptations. Daley and Marlatt offer strategies of discipling such as creating awareness of the direct and indirect pressures, acceptance of the reality of temptations, avoidance of high-risk people, places, situations, and events, visualization where one will imagine themselves saying no, assertiveness by clearly and directly saying no to drugs abuse, sticking to a support group, self-talk and keeping plans and goals in mind.²⁵

Christian Counselling

Counseling is a one-on-one relationship between a person facing an issue (s) and a professional person with training and experience in helping others cope and overcome their challenges. Counseling is “a continuous activity that happens in a mutual relationship between a counselor and counselee that is intentional, purposeful, and restorative.”²⁶ Christian counseling ministry should be biblically oriented and aim at helping people abusing drugs and substances to experience the love of God, which transforms people’s lives. The churches are mandated to shepherd God’s people through counseling as it aims at providing love, hope, and lasting solutions to suffering youths indulging in drug and substance abuse.

²⁵ Dennis C. Daley and G. Alan Marlatt, *Overcoming Your Alcohol or Drug Problem: Effective Recovery Strategies Workbook*, 2nd edition (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

²⁶ McLeod John and McLeod Julia, *Counselling Skills: A Practical Guide for Counsellors and Helping Professionals: A Practical Guide for Counsellors and Helping Professionals* (McGraw-Hill Education (UK), 2011), 11.



The Christian counselor should model Christ, who is the wonderful counselor (Isa 9:6). Garry affirms, “Surely Jesus Christ is the best model we have of an effective ‘wonderful counselor’ whose personality, knowledge, and skills enabled him to effectively assist those people who needed help.”²⁷ Through churches’ counseling programs, youths indulging in drug and substance abuse will heal physically, socially, mentally, economically, and most importantly, spiritually. Gary states that counseling “provides encouragement and guidance for those facing losses, decisions, or disappointments. Counseling can stimulate personality growth and development and help people cope more effectively with living problems, inner conflict, and crumpling emotions.”²⁸ Thus, the youths abusing drugs and substances are faced with the loss of time, opportunities, and dignity, among others. They also need guidance to make appropriate life decisions. Their emotions are not stable either; therefore, counseling provides holistic therapy. From a theological point of view, the major problem facing the youths regarding drug and substance abuse is attributed to human sin influences. However, the Christian counseling program by the churches should focus on solving the mental issues facing them.

Financial Support Program

The churches’ role in curbing drug and substance abuse further involves resource mobilization programs. Teaching, counseling, rehabilitation, and motivational speakers’ facilitation involve money. These resources can be sought from the church members and other stakeholders through fundraising. The church should be motivated by the biblical principle of giving, which includes sacrificial giving (2 Cor 8:2,3,9), solidarity giving (1 Cor 16:1–6) and solicitation giving (8:3, 8, 9:7). Mbewe suggests that the churches can raise its money through tithing (Gen 14:1–20; Num 18:212; Chron 31:5–6; Prov 3:9; Mal 3:10; Heb 7:5), freewill offerings (1 Cor 16:1-; 2 Cor 8:1-9:15) and also through income generating avenues like charging for services at a legitimate fee (Act 18:1–5, 20:33–34).²⁹

Cooperation with Other Stakeholders

The churches’ cooperation with NGOs and government is vital. Partnerships can harness resources for a common goal. It also appreciates the unique contributions that various parties

²⁷ Gary R. Collins, *Christian Counseling 3rd Edition: Revised and Updated*, 3rd edition (Thomas Nelson, 2007), 36.

²⁸ Collins, *Christian Counseling 3rd Edition: Revised and Updated*, 3rd edition, 36.

²⁹ Mbewe, 141-144.



can bring. For fruitful cooperation between the church and the existing stakeholders, Clinebell advises that the first step towards a good prevention program is the establishment of a good relationship of trust, finding support and encouragement for a unique style of intervention and concern for economic, social and environmental problems which trouble entire communities.³⁰

Methodology

The research used a qualitative research method to investigate a social problem.”³¹ Data collection instruments included interviews and questionnaires. The research instrument refers to “the interview schedules and questionnaires, and interview schedule is a set of questions that the interviewer asks when interviewing.”³²

Research Design

Research design is the plan or strategy that guides the research process. It is the organization of the conditions for data collection and analysis in a manner that combines relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure.³³ This research used a case study, which is “An in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g., an activity, event, process, or individuals) based on extensive data collection, and it gathers data concerning the present status, past experiences and environmental issues that contribute to certain behavior.”³⁴ The case study involved sampled Kapsowar town churches.

Sampling Procedure

This research used a random sampling technique whereby the respondents (clergy and church youth leaders) were randomly picked based on availability and willingness to participate. The questionnaires were administered to the youths, whereas the clergy were interviewed during the data collection.

³⁰ Howard J. Clinebell, Jr, *Community Mental Health: The Role of the Church and the Temple* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 79-81.

³¹ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Sage, 2014), 484.

³² Olive Mugenda and Abel Mugenda. *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (Nairobi, Kenya: Acts Press, 2003), 86.

³³ C. R. Kothari and Gaurav Garg, *Research Methodology*, Fourth edition (New Delhi: New Age International Publishers, 2019).

³⁴ Creswell, *Research Design.*, 485.



Sample and Sample Size

A sample refers to a smaller data set that a researcher chooses from a large population. In contrast, a sample size refers to the number of participants selected from a larger population to represent the whole statistically. The sample size is “The number of items to be selected from the universe to constitute a sample.”³⁵ The response population sample size comprised at least one religious leader (pastor or priest) and five youth church leaders from the eight sampled churches.

Table 1: Sample Size

Description	Numbers
1 Clergy from the sampled churches	8
5 Youths from the sampled churches	40
TOTAL	48

Data Processing and Analysis

The collected interview data were recorded, and questionnaire data was checked for consistency, cleaned of errors, and coded. The findings were categorized and summarized. The research question looked into measures put in place to curb drug and substance abuse among youths aged 18-30 years.

Instituted Measure Against Drug and Substance Abuse

The respondents listed and discussed various initiatives the churches have established to curb drug and substance abuse in Kapsowar town. The programs include establishing youth fellowships, preaching and praying against the abuse of substances, financial support through godly business establishments, rehabilitation and advocacy, youth recreational activities, Bible study, and mentorship programs.

³⁵ Kothari and Garg, *Research Methodology.*, 53.



Figure 1 Ways in Which the Churches are Involved in Curbing Drugs



Mentorship Programs

Most responses indicated that youths are mentored through seminars, youth conferences, and Bible study sessions. According to participant CYG27, the church she attends organizes youth mentorship forums where topics like drugs and substance abuse are addressed. The informative program has helped many youths to overcome negative peer influences. A church leader confirmed that they run youth programs that address drug abuse issues. In addition, counseling sessions are organized to deal with mental issues the youth are facing. Respondents CCG2, CCG7, CYG22, CYG36, and CYG40 noted that the mentorship programs are not consistent, thus affecting the efforts.

Evangelism and Outreach Mission

The responses from most participants stated that evangelism and outreach are two of the programs in many churches, especially among youths in learning institutions. CCG7 states that churches visit schools to advocate for the fight against drugs and substance abuse through Weekend Challenge and Sunday Service programs. According to participant CCG2, the churches actively participate in pastoral programs in church-founded learning institutions, from primary to college institutions. Through these programs, the churches get the opportunity to teach God's word and address awareness concerning drug and substance



abuse. In addition, participant CCG8 gave a recent example of a mass evangelism outreach mission in the town whereby university students were invited and involved by one of the churches in the locality. This mission outreach also targeted young people struggling with drug abuse.

Preaching and Praying against Drug and Substance Abuse

There has been a deliberate effort to preach and pray for the youths to overcome oppressive powers interpreted as partly spiritual. All the respondents attested that the churches preach and pray for the addicted youths and their affected families. Through these avenues, there has been great awareness and revival of youth ministry in many churches in Kapsowar.

Bible Study Programs

Some participants cited youth Bible study groups as a critical opportunity to study, meditate, interpret, and apply God’s word by living holy and liberated lives. These churches organize virtual meetings to reconnect with youth studying or working in far areas.

Also, respondent CCG4 pointed out an interdenominational Bible study group targeting young men affected by drug abuse. Through the forum, many are evangelized and encouraged; the respondents termed this initiative a success story.

Church Recreational Activities

Some participants showed that the churches developed fun day activities targeting young people. The open invitation is extended to youths who are not in church. Participant CYG8 stated that the fun activities include sporting activities whereby the churches have bought various sporting equipment for the youths. Through these activities, the clergy can share God’s word. According to participant CYG22, these activities unite young people for a shared experience, especially during school holidays. Also, sporting activities have helped many youths to explore their talents. Some have been hired in football clubs, for instance, thus minimizing unemployment in society, which was attributed above to subjecting youths to the abuse of drugs and substance abuse. CCG5 and CYG17 highlighted other recreational fun activities, including hiking and children’s home visitation.

Rehabilitation and Advocacy Programs

The responses indicated that none of the Kapsowar town churches have rehabilitation centers for drug and substance abusers. However, they participate in encouraging and supporting the



abusers and their families financially, emotionally, and spiritually in the rehabilitation transition process or as they go through the government rehabilitation centers. For example, according to respondent CCG3, the church in which he serves as a clergy has been counseling and encouraging affected family members in the congregation to take their addicted persons for rehabilitation processes. Even though the churches in Kapsowar town do not own their own rehabilitation center(s), their efforts through the rehabilitation and advocacy programs have yielded some positive results. The rehabilitation process continues to be a challenge and slow due to the unwillingness of most abusers to be rehabilitated and financial challenges. The data showed that the church has partnered with the county government of Elgeyo Marakwet to sponsor the rehabilitation of drug addicts. Some respondents also noted that the churches in Kapsowar town ran a campaign that advocated for a drug-free society. They peacefully demonstrated around the town streets while creating awareness.

Economic Empowerment of the Reformed Addicts

Some participant responses stated that financial support is one of the main ways the churches have played against drug abuse. Clergy CCG2 gave an example in which his congregation has been offering support to the local alcoholic brewers and drug addicts in the town and its environs. The churches establish small businesses for reformed addicts. In other cases, respondents CYG14 and CYG37 stated that their congregations offer educational support to youths to get technical skills that can empower them economically. In summary, the study established that churches in Kapsowar have been involved in addressing the issue of drug and substance abuse through mentorship, evangelism, outreach mission programs, preaching and praying, Bible study, recreational activities, rehabilitation and advocacy, and financial support through godly business establishments. The churches must be consistent in their efforts and partner with other stakeholders.

Discussion

The following discussion highlights the four moments of the pastoral circle theory.

Immersion Question- What is Happening Here?

The abuse of drugs and substances by the youths is not only unacceptable social or spiritual behavior but also a sinful act that displeases God- the Almighty creator of the universe- who



created the youths in His own image and likeness and gave the dominion mandate to care for His creation.

Biblically, God created the universe and declared everything as good, meaning without evil (Gen 1:31). Abuse of drugs is a clear indication of misuse of the power bestowed upon man by God in subduing the earth as stewards of His creation (Gen 1:2, 6:28). As this challenge continues to spread, the churches have put in preventive measures and initiatives to assist those under the influence of drugs.

Analysis Question- Why is it happening?

There are various reasons why youths in Kapsowar abuse drugs and substances. Biblically, it is attributed to the sinfulness of the human heart since Genesis 3. Eventually, the original sin led to enmity with God and guilt characterizing that relationship (Ps 14:1, 53:3, 143:2; Rom 3:9,23; Gal 3:22).

Reflection Question- What Does it Mean Through Lenses of Faith?

Drug and substance abuse is a sin before the Holy God. It also affects different aspects of a person's life, including the social, spiritual, economic, and physical dimensions. The effects include negligence in parental responsibility by the abusers, increased levels of crime like theft and murder cases, increased poverty levels, school dropouts, health effects like HIV/AIDS risk infections, liver cirrhosis, impaired sight, and death, among other effects. Drug and substance abuse can lead to mockery and brawling (Prov 20:1), debauchery (Eph 5:18), not inheriting the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9–11; 1 Cor 3:16-17; Gal 5:19–21;), stumbling in judgment (Isa 28:7), and other emotions like sorrow, strife, complains. It results in disgrace and ridicule as in Noah's case (Gen 9:20–22), commitment of wrongs that would not have been done while in a sober state (Gen 19:31-36), defiles the body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16–19, 6:19-20) and more so, breaks the human relationship intended to exist between God and man (Isa 59:1–2).

Response Question- How Should We Respond?

Churches have a critical role to play. As Christ's ambassadors on earth, the church is called upon to reconcile sinners with God (1 Cor 5:20). They are to imitate Christ and walk in love and holiness (Eph 2:10, 4:1–3, 5:1–3). In doing so, many youth abusers will be reached out



to, disciplined, mentored, and rehabilitated, and eventually acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. God calls the church to be the salt and light of the world.

The churches can reach out to them through evangelism, discipleship, rehabilitation, and mentorship. However, young people should respond to Jesus' call of salvation. He came to liberate sinners and give them abundant life (Luke 5:32; John 3:16). As the youths respond to the salvation call, they will enjoy the blessedness of salvation, which includes access to God's grace (Eph 2:18), adoption into the family of God as His children (Gal 4:5, Jn 1:12), inheritance (Col 3:24, 1 Pet 1:3–4), heavenly citizenship (Eph 2:19), heirs of God (Rom 8:17; Gal 3:29), new creation (2 Cor 5:17, Gal 6:15), servants of God (Rom 6:22), priests of God (1 Pet 2:9), reconciliation to God (Eph 2:13), and sanctification (Act 26:18; 1 Cor 6:11).

Therefore, churches ought to wake up to the God-given responsibility and work hand in hand with the government and other non-governmental authorities in the fight against drug abuse. Their involvement is a missiological call in nature, which God entrusted to them as His chosen people. God is God of mission, and Jesus challenged His disciples to go out and proclaim the good news (Matt 28:18–20; Luke 9:1). Parents should be present in their children's lives so that they may guide them in the appropriate ways and in choosing the right peers who can influence them in the things of God. The Bible exhorts parents and the churches to train a child in how he should go (Prov 22:6). At the same time, the youth should be willing to heed instructions (Prov 1:8–9). Therefore, the churches must continually remind parents to teach and ground their children in the word of God.

The youths should always note that the biblical laws provided in the scripture should be obeyed. In addition, the governmental law against the abuse of drugs and substances should be adhered to as well. Another response from the youths should be continual knowledge of the fact that their bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit; therefore, they should not be polluted with destructive drugs. Paul commands the youths to honor God with their bodies (1 Cor 6:20), meaning that as youths indulge in drug and substance abuse, God is dishonored. The youths should respond by having self-control, which is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22). Dealing with drug and substance abuse needs unified efforts from the church, NGOs, and relevant government agencies.



Conclusion

The church plays a critical role in society. The study findings showed that churches in Kapsowar town are involved in curbing drug and substance abuse through various programs. First, churches mentor both church-going and non-church-going youths through seminars and conferences. This preventive measure ensures youth can act accordingly and overcome prevailing social pressures. Second, the pulpit ministry provides an opportunity to guide and inform. Third, the Bible study program provides platforms where young people can learn God's word. The Bible study sessions equip young people to overcome the challenges related to drugs and substance abuse. Fourth, recreational activities have attracted many youths to church. In their assembling, God's word is taught, and the issues of drug and substance abuse are addressed. Fifth, the churches participate in rehabilitation and advocacy programs. Finally, the study established that the churches in Kapsowar town support former drug addicts to develop an alternative source of income. Former addicts are empowered with income-generating ventures for economic sustainability.

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