

Religion and drug use theology religion essay



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Since the early 80s, a body of research has surfaced focusing on the relationship between religion and drug use. This literature states that there was a negative relationship between religion and drug use. The history of drug use is entangled with religion and societal views on these behaviors often have their roots in spiritual or religious perspective. In Jewish and Christian scriptures, for example, the drinking of wine is assumed to be part of ordinary life, and its virtues are even adorned.

The central sacramental observance in both Judaism and Christianity involve the use of wine. Other religions have assigned sacred uses to other drugs as well, including tobacco and hallucinogens, such as peyote. On the other hand, many religions, such as Islam, strictly prohibit the use of alcohol drinks or other drugs, and other religious groups strongly advise against their use. Religion has also impacted our views of the problems associated with alcohol and drug abuse. Although Judeo-Christian culture approve of light to moderate alcohol use, there is a clear and consistence biblical condemnation of drunkenness, the use of alcohol in a manner that cause impairment or harm. This is abuse of alcohol that is often denounced by religious teachings as sinful. Use of drugs that inflict harm or increase the possibility of harm to oneself or others is also placed in this category. Given these longstanding connections between religion and substance use, and the important roles of religious and spiritual perspective in shaping our moral understanding of addiction, researchers have long been fascinated in the relationship between religion, and drug use problems in populations (Fuller 17-91).

Evidence that religion may directly influence substance use by serving as a moral compass comes primarily from studies that have looked at why people

choose not to drink. Studies have been done to correlate attitude on drug use with several measures of religiousness, including affiliation, church attendance, degree of satisfaction derived from church activities, and the extent to which people considered themselves religious.

Since religion has been acclaimed to be a protective mechanism against drug use and dependence, many researchers have conducted their studies by linking this issue with the young adults in our society. This is so since they are the ones who are mostly affected by drug use. Their findings indicated that young people who are seriously committed in their religions are more likely to refrain from using drugs than those who are not. Why since they are students who tend to avoid peer influence or groups that may lead them to engage in this behavior, and engage in other activities that may be of advantage to them. It has been examined that students who perform well at school, and those who uphold on the idea of going to college are the ones who less likely use drugs and also have been known to more religious (Maggs455).

An understanding of how religion affects drug use has been hampered by lack of theoretical development. One of the major theoretical orientations used to examine religious drug use is social control theory. According to this perspective, individuals develop bonds to society that restrain them from using drugs through the following. First, individual become attached to a faith community and its members. Because of this attachment and the negative sanctions that may follow drug use, those who attend service are less expected to use drugs than those who do not. Second involvement in religious activities allows less time for drug experimentation. Involvement

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also may provide a network of support that insulates people from opportunities to use drugs.

Third, commitment to a religious organization and its goal provides existential meaning that makes drugs use less attractive. Fourth, the belief system of most religious groups opposes drug use and their teachings may reinforce personal beliefs against use. In short, religious organizations tend to involve people in conventional activities and social network that disapprove of illicit drug use. If, through Religious activities, individuals develop a network of friends who do not use drugs and whose attitudes are not tolerant of drug use, participation may reinforce attitudes against drug use. Even those who have friends who use drugs might refrain from the use if they receive high levels of counterbalancing definitions from religious teachings and activities. Both of these theories provide insights in to the process of how religion influences drug use. Social control theorist assumes that bonds to a religious organization and to others who are involved in the organization deter drug use.

Replacing health care with religion practice

In 1999 Haworth press published a journal the journal of religion and abuse. The issues stated that while membership in close religious groups may enhance social support for those who abide by prescription and proscription of the group, individuals who deviate from the accepted standard may be judged negatively and consequently be marginalized. If a religious person becomes ill members of his church pray for his healing if the person receives

healing, the religious group affirms their beliefs. If no healing is received the person is often blamed for the sickness and it is always blamed on him.

Religious practices have been used to replace traditional health care as well as physical care. This is not surprising since there is such a great overlap between mental health and spiritual health, which is indistinguishable. Some religions have been known to prohibit their members from going to the hospital and also to from taking drugs. Believers of these religions claim miraculous cures where they seek help from faith healers, turning exclusively to religious activities instead of seeking timely medical attention.

Other religions have been known to treat their members with some drugs which are considered to be harmful to the human bodies thus endangering the lives of their members. For example a religious group in Mexico has been known to use tobacco for their rituals in their religious ceremony. This is where believers in this religion proclaiming that through usage of this substance one experience healing of the mind and the body but on the hand we know that tobacco is a drug (Hoyee 34-40).

Conclusion

With the studies done linking drug use and religion it has clearly established that religion plays an important role in curbing and influencing the drug usage in our society, most people have been known to refrain from the drug use due to religion teachings. On the other hand, we see also religion playing a big part in inducing drug use by its members. This is where some religions permitting their members to drink wine, smoke tobacco and indulge in other drug related practices which are harmful to the human body. In a way, we

can say religion plays a big part in influencing people in every aspect of our lives.

Work cited

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