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## **Challenges of Alcoholism in the Catholic Diocese of Nakuru: A Pastoral Response**

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# Challenges of Alcoholism in the Catholic Diocese of Nakuru: A Pastoral Response

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## Abstract

Alcohol has increasingly become a main and important drink for victory parties, weddings, birthdays, ordinations, graduation parties and home coming events. The users cite its use for celebrating the gift of life, success and of one another. The study examined and investigate the causes and the consequences of alcoholism in Nakuru. The study presented recommendations to alcoholism in the light of the teachings of the Church; this will follow biblical and Tradition. The approach to tackle alcoholism in Small Christian Communities of Nakuru will be in the context of a pastoral response. The study followed a pastoral circle method which has four moments namely insertion, social analysis, theological reflection and pastoral planning or action. For insertion, the researcher reflected on his experience to enrich the study. The study employed the social analysis through which the root causes of the social problem of alcoholism was discussed. The aim in this step was to go back to the root causes of the problem. Through applying theological reflection, we intended to judge the challenge of alcoholism and its impact on the people of Nakuru this will be in the light of the teachings of the Church using scripture and the tradition. Finally, the study presents the action plan; which helped in recommending practical solutions for moral action. This lecture benefits; pastoral agents in order to help members of any Small Christian Community on the chronic phenomenon of alcoholism in Nakuru.

**Keywords:** *Alcoholism, Catholic Church and Nakuru Dioceses.*

## 1.0 Introduction

The area under the jurisdiction of the Catholic Diocese of Nakuru consists of two counties, Nakuru and Baringo. The general population in the Diocese is more than two million people and of these, Catholics are about 61%. The Diocese of Nakuru is made of a mixture of ethnic groups. The Diocese is mult-lingu. However, the Kalenjin is a large ethnic community.

In most areas of the Diocese of Nakuru, Alcoholic locally made beverages are sold and bought every day. In most rural areas some people go to drinking joints as early as 10am in the morning. Local brewers control a staggering 72% of the alcohol market. This gave consumers a safer alternative to unregulated and bad-quality brews, which often lead to fatalities. In addition to local brands, there are a lot of East African Breweries Ltd modern brands on the market especially in the urban. There is a lot of deflecting allegations of exploitation; companies are operating a host of social retail enterprises. In addition to East Africa breweries SABMiller, one of the brewers, has pioneered to brew Impala, the first beer made from cassava, a tough, drought-resistant root grown across Kenya that can replace illicit brews but still people go for the local brews. Alcohol consumption is likely to increase, as seen in other parts of Kenya due to the fact that many alcohol shops, bars and retailers keep coming and opening businesses in Nakuru. Moreover, these supplement the already existing local beverages.<sup>1</sup>

Alcoholism formerly called alcohol dependence or alcohol addiction is the more severe end of the alcohol use disorder spectrum. It is a destructive pattern of alcohol use that includes tolerance to or withdrawal from the substance, using more alcohol or using it for longer than planned, and trouble reducing its use or inability to use it in moderation. Other potential symptoms include spending an inordinate amount of time getting, using, or recovering from the use of alcohol, compromised functioning, and, or continuing to use alcohol despite an awareness of the detrimental effects it is having on one's life. Alcoholism is one of the leading causes of a dysfunctional family. Alcoholism usually has strong negative effects on marital relationships. Separated and divorced men and women were three times as likely as married men and women to say they had been married to an alcoholic or problem drinker.

Adults from alcoholic families experience higher levels of state and trait anxiety and lower levels of differentiation of self than adults raised in non-alcoholic families. Additionally, adult children of alcoholics have lower self-esteem, excessive feelings of responsibility, difficulties reaching out, higher incidence of depression, and increased likelihood of becoming alcoholics. The challenge has become a major problem among people of all walks of life both in the home and in the church. In the long run families are broken, loss of jobs witnessed, school dropouts and even effects on health (Raymond, 1964). This paper thus addresses the consequences of alcoholism in Nakuru and offers some pastoral responses to the effects as a way forward on how to redeem society from it. The social-cultural demography of the territory which is purely celebrating life and much of the population rural could also account for the consumption of alcoholic drinks in the Diocese.

The researchers experience reveals that two categories of alcohol exists in the territory these are the local brews which include; *Kangara, Busaa, Chagaa, Muratina, Manywek* and *Kipkrin* and the modern brands among them includes; *tusker, eagle lager, vodka, spirits Heineken* and *Smirnoff, senator, Guinness* etc. It is also evident that majority of the people of Nakuru prefer local

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice Gelinias, *Alcoholism and You*, Naiorbi: Paulines Africa, 1990.22.

brews than modern brands simply because they are cheaper and readily available but also locally made. However, many of the local brands are illicit and thus have caused more harm than good.

## **2.1 The Root Causes of the Phenomenon of Alcoholism in Nakuru**

This section presents the basic reasons to why people in Nakuru drink excessively alcohol. The root causes why people in Nakuru have fallen in to alcoholic addiction include; sociological, psychological and physiological.

### **2.1.1 Initiation and Festivals**

The people of Nakuru and most Africans generally consume Alcohol for purposes of celebration. Often times during initiation rites like birth days, marriage ceremonies, the birth of a child, anniversaries and other festivals where alcohol become an avenue where people consume it for celebratory purposes are fertility feasts and appeasement of ancestral spirits so that the community is blessed like in the case of the Akans people of Ghana.<sup>2</sup> Alcohol is also consumed during installation of chiefs in societies where chiefdoms are cultural valued, circumcision rite.<sup>3</sup> Given that the people of Nakuru practice a lot of initiation rites like marriages and also have a lot of festivals like graduations throughout the year where alcohol is a major drink provided in plenty it's inevitable that alcoholism has thrived.

### **2.1.2 Economic and Frustration**

One of the main causes of alcoholism is to forget life's struggles and problems. Frustration as a result of poverty and economic challenges lead many rural and urban dwellers to drinking. Many alcoholics drink in the hope that they will be able to forget their problems by drinking large quantities of alcohol. A person who drinks irresponsibly may develop alcohol tolerance in the long run. The more a person drinks, the more he or she becomes more alcohol tolerant. This can lead to greater alcohol consumption, and then later, to alcoholism.<sup>4</sup>

### **2.1.3 Media Influence**

Erroneous Media, advertising and minimum pricing may well be one of the causes of the drinking problem. The media has a lot of influence on people's perception, purpose and usage of an item.<sup>5</sup> The government failure to regulate media adverts, the abundant presence of local brew on the market and the cheap prices for alcohol. It is no doubt alcoholism in Kenya and in particular in Nakuru has increased. That's partly because the minimum price per unit is likely to be set too low to have much impact on consumers of alcohol, and partly because it is not matched by a meaningful strategy to deal with the culture of alcohol prevention and health restrictions. Despite the continual restriction of underage and school going students from drinking alcohol it seems the vice is uncontrollable.<sup>6</sup>

### **2.1.4 Inherited Culture**

Socio-cultural influences like a family's history to brew and drink also contribute to the development of alcohol addiction. For our purposes, the term culture describes a group's learned

<sup>2</sup>Eric O. Ayisi, *An Introduction to the Study of African Culture*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1992. 82.

<sup>3</sup> John Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*, London: Heinemann Publishers, 1981. 91.

<sup>4</sup> John Mary Katuramu, *The Christian view on Alcohol and Drug Abuse: Causes and Treatment*, Bangui: Farwing Printery, 1990. 37.

<sup>5</sup> Raymond McCarthy, *Alcohol Education for Classroom and Community*, 268.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 38.

and shared pattern of attitude and beliefs. These values and beliefs guide group membership behavior and their social interactions. When a family accepts or tolerates drunkenness, the members of that group are more vulnerable to addiction. This is how culture is transmitted from one generation to the next. Children learn from their family members about alcohol.<sup>7</sup> It has also been observed that a number of communities in Nakuru Diocese still value the traditional means of reconciliation where two families or parties are brought together to share a meal and drink to restore friendship and corporation. In most incidences alcohol is the major unifying factor served among people to cement their renewed relationships.<sup>8</sup>

### **2.1.5 Peers and Idleness**

The environment or one's peers or situations can also help us to understand the causes of alcohol addiction. Addiction is a harmful vice. It is important to look at circumstances as that which lead people to repeat certain behaviors, even when these behaviors are harmful. This is because people learn to anticipate some benefit from the addiction even though it is harmful. These benefits can range from temporal forgetting of problems; suppress thoughts from a loss of a loved one or frustrating marriage, being jobless and others. This happens when one is unemployed or resides close to the brewing point or easy access to free alcohol.<sup>9</sup>

### **2.1.6 Drug Stimulant**

Alcohol works as a drug and stimulant for the body. It awakes the brain to react to certain situations where one was shy to respond to. Some people have become workaholics in that they think they perform well their duties while drunk and thus addiction. In the same respect idleness and exaggerated free time can be a factor for getting hooked to the vice. People have varying abilities to cope with unpleasant emotions or circumstances thus resort to alcohol.<sup>10</sup>

### **2.1.7 Moral Decadence**

One's religious conviction or maturity influences one's ability to get hooked to alcoholism or alcohol addiction. Here we may refer it to the spirituality or moral standard of the person as another causal factor that can determine whether an addiction develops and flourishes. Morality reflects a belief that life has a meaning and purpose. This definition is inclusive and respectful. It includes the many different, specific beliefs that people have about that meaning and purpose. For some people, spirituality includes specific beliefs that there is something bigger and greater than our individual existence. People might call this a higher power; a God; many gods; the life force; the universe; Source; or Spirit (to name just a few). For other people, there is no higher power or religion attached to that belief. These people derive meaning and purpose through a personal set of values and goals and enjoyment is one of them which eventually lead to addiction. Thus, lack of a spiritual anchor can also lead to the development of an addiction.<sup>11</sup>

### **2.1.8 Personality Disorder**

A person's unique physiology and weak personality can create an addiction. People who cannot say enough or those who cannot differ from the crowd mentality will easily fall into the vice. In

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<sup>7</sup> John Mary Katuramu, *The Christian view on Alcohol and Drug Abuse: Causes and Treatment*, 65.

<sup>8</sup> Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, Mary Knoll: Orbis Books 1997.258.

<sup>9</sup> Maurice Gelinat, *Alcoholism and You*, 46.

<sup>10</sup> Anthony Tom Horvath, et al., *What Causes Alcoholism?: Making a difference in your Community Every day*, Hancock: Washington D.C. Books, 2007.34.

<sup>11</sup> John Mary Katuramu, *The Christian view on Alcohol and Drug Abuse: Causes and Treatment*, 71.

Nakuru some people have become alcoholics simply because they want to suppress inferiority complex or they are influenced by the crowd to drink.<sup>12</sup> Some people may enjoy a substance or activity so much that it becomes very tempting and difficult to resist. Likewise, the ability to temper impulsive desires with rational thought is a brain function that varies among different people. Some people may have a deficiency in their capacity to resist certain types of impulses than others. Thus, these folks would be at greater risk for developing an addiction because of their personality vulnerability. Oddly enough, even normal human brain functioning, and its chemistry, make people vulnerable to addiction. Our normal brain chemistry and functioning motivate us to repeat behaviors that are pleasurable. The repetition of these behaviors ensured our species survival. Unfortunately, it also makes human beings vulnerable to developing addictions to harmful substances and activities that are pleasurable.<sup>13</sup>

### **3.0. The Negative Consequences of Alcoholism to the People of Nakuru**

Excessive amounts of alcoholic drinks, which are very strong, very cheap, and very dangerous, can have adverse effects on spiritual, physical, mental and social health as discussed.

#### **3.1.1. Alcohol dividing Families**

Alcoholism as an excessive consumption of alcohol is devastating to all members of the family. From reading related literature there are mixed reactions in the family. With some pointing at one another as being unable to respond earlier to the growing habit of alcoholism in one or several members of their family. And others claiming that it was not their fault for the victim is mature enough to decide what is right and wrong. The debate is endless concerning this. Nevertheless, the fact remains that alcoholism has negative impacts on families in Nakuru. It is on this note that since families are strong pillars of SCC's their disintegration strongly affects the life of the SCC's and Christian life in the Diocese.<sup>14</sup>

#### **3.1.2 Impact on Prayer life**

Alcoholics addicted to drinking cannot control their drinking unless with the intervention of a counselor. If one is an alcoholic, there is always a compulsive desire to drink. When one drinks, the negative personality traits are manifested, such as anger or disorderly speech. This may be intensified into reckless and uncontrolled sleep. For Christians to overdo any practice may have negative effects in other areas of life this includes prayer life and lessened active participation in spiritual activities of the community. When a man or woman is drunk in the evening of Saturday it becomes hard for that person to pray on a Sunday because of hunger-over or say before one goes to bed, for he/she is not in the normal state of mind and body cannot pray.<sup>15</sup>

#### **3.1.3 Alcohol and AIDS Transmission**

Alcoholic use and drunken behavior has been acknowledged as one of the contributors to AIDS infection worldwide and especially in Africa, Christians of the Diocese of Nakuru not being spared. This is backed by the World Health Organization which writes, "The eastern and southern regions of Africa have the highest rate of alcohol consumption in the world-16.6 liters of pure

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<sup>12</sup> Raymond G. McCarthy, *Alcohol Education for Classroom and Community*, 198.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 77.

<sup>14</sup> "How Alcohol Affects the Entire Family" <http://al-anon.org/how-alcoholism-affects-the-entire-family/> (accessed on 20/11/2015)

<sup>15</sup> Jolly P. Katteba, *The Challenge of Alcohol and Substance abuse in Families: What is my Role*, Kisubi: Marianum Press, 2011.43.

alcohol per adult drinker per year.”<sup>16</sup> Therefore, alcohol has three main disadvantages in the war against HIV/AIDS namely; the alcohol used is believed to reduce fears connected to sex, encourages risky sex, and promotes extra power for sex. Secondly, alcohol boosts the development of the disease for those who have been infected and finally alcohol reduces the effects of medical treatment especially for those under ARVs.<sup>17</sup>

### 3.1.4 Alcohol; a Public Health Problem

Health problems associated with alcoholism are short-term like nausea or lowering of body temperature and others are long term like cancer or liver damage. Indeed, several health challenges of alcoholism are; sedation of the brain in this case we mean the sense of reducing anxiety, tension, apprehensions, fears, strong emotions, such as anger; sedation gives a sense of distance from one's problems and worries. This sedation will be either total in the case of someone who drinks to the point of intoxication, or partial which is the opposite.<sup>18</sup> This in one way or the other affects the Christianity in an area where Christian participation is needed. It also has various health complications to the human body. For example; alcohol interferes with the brain's communication pathways, and can affect the way the brain looks and works. These disruptions can change mood and behavior. Drinking a lot of alcohol over a long time or too much on a single occasion can damage the heart, causing problems including; cardiomyopathy stretching and drooping of heart muscle, stroke, and high blood pressure. It can also lead to a variety of problems and liver inflammations and it can cause the pancreas to produce toxic substances that can eventually lead to pancreatitis, a dangerous inflammation and swelling of the blood vessels in the pancreas that prevents proper digestion. It is also true that drinking too much alcohol can increase the risk of developing certain cancers, including cancers of the: throat, liver and the breast. It can also weaken one's immune system, making the body a much easier target for disease. In addition, chronic drinkers are more liable to contract diseases like pneumonia, liver defects and tuberculosis than people who do not drink too much.<sup>19</sup> Alcohol apart from diseases has also dangerous side effects of the person such as nausea, vomiting, slurring of speech, headaches, reduced body coordination and public nuisance personality.<sup>20</sup>

### 3.1.5 Alcohol and Crime

For example, driving while drunk can have far-reaching effects especially when an accident is caused.<sup>21</sup> It is also true that alcoholics will also abuse other drugs like *bhang* in the long run which makes them vulnerable to losing their rational freedom and thus crime. Alcoholism can mislead one to engage in crimes like fighting, domestic violence and mob justice.<sup>22</sup>

### 3.1.6 Marital Problems

Heavy drinking creates alcohol problems and disorders associated with lower marital satisfaction. Alcohol use is a contributing factor to domestic violence and aggression, both physical and psychological. Alcohol and substance use are among the most common reasons given for a divorce

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<sup>16</sup> World Health Organization, Geneva, 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Mukunzu Harrison Mativo, *The Fight against HIV and AIDS: A Call for New Approaches to Catechesis and Small Christian Communities*, Kenya: Vipra Enterprise, 2015, pg 88.

<sup>18</sup> Mourice Gelinas, *How to Overcome Alcoholism*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, (1990), Pg 20

<sup>19</sup> Jolly P. Katteba, *The Challenge of Alcohol and Substance Abuse in Families: What is my Role*, 45.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>21</sup> Raymond G. McCarthy, *Alcohol Education for Classroom and Community*, 176.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 170.

and separation mostly for rural for women. It is also one of the most common reasons given for seeking marriage counseling. Couples in which one spouse has an alcohol use disorder experience more negative interactions and fewer positive interactions than couples in which neither spouse has an alcohol disorder. Therefore, alcohol disintegrates family and marriage.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.1.7 Alcohol Threatens the Common Good

Alcohol can affect the person into influences that will end up into reckless sexual activity, the use of contraceptives coupled with psychological effects of alcohol also appear to be an increase in suicidal behaviors. Alcohol abuse can also result in serious behavioral and emotional changes that ultimately destroy a person's capacity to reason morally. The negative effects from alcohol abuse can have immediate and long-term ethical consequences. From losing families and careers ruined, alcohol abuse has had an impact on society. In regard to emotion; alcohol abuse causes a negative impact creating emotional instability along with violent mood swings. They take hazardous risks often endangering themselves and or others such as driving while under the influence and having unprotected sex. The public health threat from alcohol and drug abuse is particularly troublesome; those who develop infectious diseases such as HIV through drug use have the ability to spread the infections to others especially to their partners.<sup>24</sup> The circumstance under which sin is evaluated depends on object, intention and circumstances. These three aspects get moralists in trouble while assessing the morality of a person due to alcohol.

### 3.1.8 Impact on Parenthood

Couples in which either of the spouses uses alcohol may experience greater rates of physical aggression, which negatively affect children. When both spouses drink heavily or both spouses report greater alcohol dependence, couples report the most frequent husband-perpetrated physical aggression. Wife-perpetrated physical aggression is more frequent when either spouse is more dependent and is not reduced if both spouses are dependent.<sup>25</sup> This impacts the member of the children life where parents may not fulfill their responsibilities to the children.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.1.9 Alcohol and Church Participation

Alcohol dependence causes laziness through its effects on the brain and physical body. It affects the mind and body from an eclectic mix of knowledge. The brain is made up of cells called neurons. The neurons in the brain control a number of things, including cognition, sensation, muscle movement, balance and emotions. Neurons throughout the brain are connected via small junctions called synapses. Neurons use these synapses to communicate with each other via neurotransmitters, which are chemicals that neurons make and secrete. When one neuron gets stimulated, it releases neurotransmitters into the synapse. These neurotransmitters then can either stimulate other neurons in the synapse, generating a nerve signal, or they can inhibit other neurons, making them less active. While the effects of alcohol can be fairly predictable, there are factors that can change the way it affects the same person on different occasions. Some of these factors

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid, 52.

<sup>24</sup> Danielle Garza-Michael Gonzales, *The Moral and Ethical Effects of Alcohol and Drugs and Society*, Toronto: Paulist Press, 2013. 54.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 87.



are low mood and fatigue. As a result the participation is of the alcoholic in church activities will be lessened through absenteeism or abandoning the regular attendance of church.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.1.10 Student Low Grades

Not only do the elderly, the parents or family households drink alcohol but also school going students. And for most students, studying and preparation for tests is essential to academic performance. When alcohol is in the body system the brain's ability to learn and store information is inhibited due to compromising the hippocampus, vital to the formation of new memories. Memories are solidified during sleep. Alcohol interferes with sleep cycle by disrupting the sequence and duration of normal sleep, thus reducing the brain's ability to retain information. The sleep deprivation suppresses normal hormonal levels decreasing oxygen availability and consumption, thus decreasing endurance. People are still likely to feel tired after sleeping following a night of drinking as they will have missed out on quality sleep. Students and children who abuse alcohol are potential members of the SCC but once they begin this character of drinking alcohol it is most likely that their participation in church related activities will be minimal in the long run the SCCs, the parish and diocese will be at a loss.<sup>28</sup>

### 3.1.11 Impact on SCC's Economic Strength

Alcohol consumption can affect work performance in several ways; there is ample evidence that people with alcohol dependence and drinking problems are on sick leave more frequently than other employees, with a significant cost to employees, employers, and social security systems whereby this affects the family incomes. In Nakuru it is estimated that workers with drinking problems are nearly 3 times more likely than others to have injury-related absences from work. There is also incidences of work accidents at the workplace this include fatal accidents at work linked to alcohol and at workaholic which affects the person's normal work routine. Heavy drinking at work may also reduce productivity whereby performance at work, in the 'shamba' or business may be affected both by the volume and pattern of drinking. Co-workers perceive that heavy drinkers have lower performance, problems in personal relationships and lack of self-direction, though drinkers themselves do not necessarily perceive effects on their work performance. Furthermore, alcohol abuse may lead to unemployment and unemployment may lead to increased poverty and low income of the community. Poor members of society mean a poor Diocese. It is also possible that once one is addicted to alcohol it is possible to steal from their family members in order to get money for drinking.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.1.12 Domestic Violence

Alcohol plays a role in a substantial number of domestic violence incidents, especially in the case of abusing husbands. Often times a home becomes a battle ground if both the offender and the victim have been drinking. The relationship between alcohol and domestic violence is complex and the precise role of alcohol in the family remains negative. Heavy drinking has been strongly linked to violence between partners and to a lesser extent to violence towards others, possibly because proximity increases the opportunities for violence. Pastoral agents in the Diocese of Nakuru indicate that show that a large fraction of reported domestic violence incidents is related to alcohol use by the male partner. For instance, many rural women who recently experienced

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<sup>27</sup> Mary Novice Bakebwa, *The Role of The Church in Moral Growth of the Family*, Kisubi: Marianum, 2000.67.

<sup>28</sup> Mary Novice Bakebwa, *The Role of The Church in Moral Growth of the Family*, 84.

<sup>29</sup> Maurice M. Getrude, *The Incidence of Drug Abuse and Alcoholism in Families*, West Minister: The NewMan Press, 1977. 54.

domestic violence reported that their partner had consumed alcohol, and abusing husbands were using alcohol and were unemployed. There is a need to better understand the possible role of alcohol intoxication or dependence in the processes through which incidents escalate into violence. There is little doubt that alcohol consumption has many social and marital consequences that affect the life of the people and the Diocesan pastoral office must go beyond the pulpit in order to restore sanity and on-going family catechesis in the homes.<sup>30</sup>

### **3.1.13 Impact on Reproductive Health**

Alcoholism in some men has been linked to impotence and in women infertility and sometimes miscarriage. This is simply because alcoholism is linked to poor nutrition, foetal alcohol syndrome and behavioral abnormalities that affect the whole body system.

### **3.1.14 Impact on Pastoral Work**

A number of pastoral agents do not give a good example because some take in the public. This has given parishioners quoting them like they quote Jesus in Cana. Christians have not fulfilled their obligations in the home and this has affected pastoral work. Pastoral agents have also acted as agents of peace in bringing peace to violent families. Instead of dealing with economic and social development SCC's have spent lots of time and resources on alcohol than sensible ventures. It is also true that chaotic family or family is hard to evangelize.

## **4.0 The Teaching of the Church on the Right Use of Alcoholic Drinks**

This section discussed the teaching of the Church on Alcohol consumption. This was drawn from the teachings of the Bible and Tradition. The study shows passages from the Old Testament and New Testament.

### **4.1 The Old Testament**

The earliest records in the Christian setting of drinking alcoholic beverages are cited in the bible during the times of Noah and Lot. Noah after being delivered from the flood became a husband and a farmer. He planted a vineyard and at times would become drunk after a successful harvest. Gen 9:20-27 speaks of his incidence drunk and stripped himself naked being found naked by one of his children, who went around speaking about it Noah cursed him. Still in the book of Gen 19:30-38 we find an account of Lot and his drinking incidence. Lot's daughters after making their father drunk influenced him to sleep down with them and the Lord was not happy of this incestuous act. Because of this and other effects resulting from excessive drinking there are a number of texts which warn against alcoholism and drug abuse. Hosea 4:10-12 "they will eat but not have enough, they will engage in prostitution but not increase, because they have deserted the Lord to give room to prostitution, to old wine which takes away their understanding." Also in proverbs 23:21 "For drunkards and gluttons became poor, and drowsiness clothes than in rags." The Old Testament condemns drunkenness, but not all use of alcohol or wine. However, not all texts of the OT condemn alcohol quality of it is preferably valued, some OT passages praise wine (Jud 9:13, Ps 104:15). Having "plenty" of wine is seen as a divine blessing (Gen 27:28). Wine was used at the ancient Jewish festivals; the Passover, Pentecost, tabernacles, and on the Sabbath, and was offered as a libation in Jewish rituals (Ex 29:40, 1 Sam 1:24), which may account for its later use in the Passover Seder. The Talmud called for red wine to be used. We also reflect in the book of Leviticus

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<sup>30</sup> "Alcohol and Social-Economic Challenges" <http://www.greenfacts.org/en/alcohol/1-2/05-social-economic-problems.htm> (accessed on 22/11/2015)

10:9 which reads “you and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the tent of meeting, or you will die”. This text prohibits the drunken man to go to the temple for it is to defile the holy place, this is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.”<sup>31</sup>

## 4.2 The New Testament

The New Testament echoes similar exhortations preventing Christians from consuming excessive wine and stopping them completely from taking beverages with contents of myrrh, which combined with alcohol has a narcotic effect. Although, Jesus partook of wine and was absurdly accused by His critics of being a drunkard (Matt 11:19, Lk 7:33). And his action of turning water into wine in His first miracle (Jn 2:1ff),<sup>32</sup> must be interpreted in context. It is not drinking that we condemn in this paper but rather addiction, alcoholism which is a spiritual, social, and psychological and health disease.

God’s people are called to be sober not intoxicated of alcoholism which is a vice. We are the sons of light and the sons of the day. If we are intoxicated with alcohol then by association we are sons of darkness and of the night. Sobriety is another way of communicating that we are walking in the light and in the truth of God’s word rather than being blind and deceived as those who are intoxicated with alcohol. God’s people who are sober are under the control of the Holy Spirit whereas the unbelievers are even as those who are intoxicated being controlled by evil spirits.<sup>33</sup> However, moderate drinking for the sake of health and socialization is permitted. The bible teaches conversion for all who have strayed from the truth of the good news, there is need to modify and change lifestyle. The Bible speaks of being transformed by the renewing of the mind (Romans 12:2f). One can renew the mind through self examination, reading and thinking habits. The Bible and devotion testimonial books will be most helpful.<sup>34</sup>

## 4.3 The Tradition of the Church Teaching on Alcoholism

Here we discuss selected fathers of the church and a few of the Church magisterial documents on alcoholism and how to go about it in pastoral ministry.

### 4.3.1 John Chrysostom

John Chrysostom in a homily on 1 Timothy 5:23 stresses moderation and adds that heretics and immature Christians who say there should be no wine are not strong enough to moderate their drinking behavior. He emphasizes the goodness of God’s creation and adjures: “Let there be no drunkenness; for wine is the work of God, but drunkenness is the work of the devil. Wine makes not drunkenness; but intemperance produces it. Do not accuse that which is the workmanship of God, but accuse the madness of a fellow mortal.” The virtue of temperance passed from Greek philosophy into Christian ethics and became one of the four cardinal virtues under St. Ambrose and St. Augustine. Drunkenness, on the other hand, is considered a manifestation of gluttony, one of the seven deadly sins as compiled by Gregory the Great in the 6th century.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Aered Dom Cody, “Leviticus” in Reginald C. Fuller, et al., *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1969) 1224,1220-1239.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 83.

<sup>33</sup> Ronald Lawler, et al., *The Teaching of Christ on Christian Living*,49.

<sup>34</sup> William Neils, *One Volume Bible Commentary*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1962. 51-52.

<sup>35</sup> “John Chrysostom” Homilies on Ephesians, Homily XIX” in Palladius Albright, *Fathers of the Church*, Toronto:Princeton Inc,(August 1990):11-36. 33.

### 4.3.2 Cyprian of Carthage

Cyprian rejects as “contrary to evangelical and apostolic discipline” the practice of some Gnostics, who used water instead of wine in the Eucharist.<sup>36</sup> While still rejecting drunkenness, on the content of the cup he says, “The Holy Spirit also makes mention of the Lord’s cup, and says, “Thy inebriating cup, how excellent it is quoting a variation of Psalm 23:5 “Now the cup which inebriates is assuredly mingled with wine, for water cannot inebriate anybody.” A Psalm of David “the Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (Psalms 23:1-6)<sup>37</sup>

### 4.3.3 Clement of Alexandria

Clement of Alexandria teaching on drinking argued that he admires those who adopt an austere life and abstain from wine, and he recommend the young to abstain from wine and alcoholic drinks so as not to inflame their “wild impulses.” But he says taking a little wine as medicine or for pleasure after the day’s work is acceptable for those who are “moored by reason and time” such that they aren’t tempted by drunkenness, and he encourages mixing water in with wine to inhibit inebriation. He also says wine not juice is an appropriate symbol of Jesus’ blood.<sup>38</sup>

## 4.4 Church Magisterial Documents

### 4.4.1 The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994)

Although the Catholic Catechism does not directly ban alcohol consumption, it does advocate temperance, advising Catholics to “avoid every kind of excess: the abuse of food, alcohol, tobacco, or medicine.” via the Catholic Enquiry Center, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference expands on this, saying that the use of pleasure-giving drugs such as alcohol is not, in itself, an immoral act.<sup>39</sup> Rather, the conference warns that the use of alcohol may be sinful if it leads to bodily harm or the formation of a hurtful addiction, especially if that habit deprives the loved ones of the addicted in any way. The CCC, no. 2288 teaches that life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good. Concern for the health of its citizens requires that society help in the attainment of living-conditions that allow them to grow and reach maturity: food and clothing, housing, health care, basic education, employment, and social welfare. Addiction to alcohol and drugs injures human dignity of the body.<sup>40</sup> Catholics tend to consume more alcohol and generally do not view the substance as problematic.<sup>41</sup> Alcohol consumption in moderation is not immoral.

<sup>36</sup> Skok Charles, “Church Fathers” in Michael Glazier - Monica Hellwig, *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, 778.

<sup>37</sup> Skok Charles, “Church Fathers” in Michael Glazier - Monica Hellwig, *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, Minnesota: Gill and Macmillan, (1994) 298-299. 297.

<sup>38</sup> “Church Fathers on Wine and Alcohol” <https://sounddoctrineministries.wordpress.com/tag/church-fathers/> (accessed on 26/11/2015)

<sup>39</sup> Catholic Enquiry Center: *Drugs, Tobacco and Alcohol*, 2014.

<sup>40</sup> CCC, no. 2288.

<sup>41</sup> Jim James Anderson, *Protestant and Catholics: Drunken Barbarians*, Indiana: University of Indiana, 2015.53.

However, we should avoid the abuse of alcohol just as we should avoid the abuse of any food, drug, or other substance. The virtue of temperance disposes us to avoid every kind of excess, the abuse of food, alcohol, tobacco, or medicine. (CCC, 2290).

#### **4.4.2 The Pontifical council for Church Pastoral Care (2001)**

The Vatican in 2001 through the pontifical council for church pastoral care issued a directive on church's teaching on drugs and drug addiction. "We know very well that if there is no demand there is no supply. Prevention, as well as education to the meaning of values which make life worth living, and the deep sense of life, leisure and celebration, will certainly lead to the reduction of this demand and as a consequence the supply of drugs will also diminish. We can no longer speak of producer countries on the one hand and consumers on the other. Nobody is a stranger to this evil wave that embraces everyone. All nations produce and all consume, especially now with the availability of synthetic drugs, spirits and alcohol. We are all involved and drug barons are very powerful and are causing more damage in the rich countries than in the poorer ones. We all have to be seriously involved in the fight against this fatal evil." No.9.

#### **4.4.3 Vatican II *Gaudium et Spes***

GS no.19 speaks of man being called into communion with God, this can only happen when man in all his bodily and human capabilities searches for God through prayer and pursuing holiness of life. He cannot commune with God through the abuse of his/her body indulging into alcoholism. He can only do so perfectly through the Eucharist. GS no 17 teaches that man responds to God in freedom and in freedom directs his actions and will to goodness. Alcoholism impairs man's capacity to fully manifest the image and likeness of God in his life.

#### **4.5. Local Magisterium Warning on Alcoholism**

The Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops and in particular through the mission of National Catholic Council on Alcoholism and Drug Related Problems is a pastoral office mandated to provide treatment for clergy and other employees of the Catholic Church suffering from addictions. The Council also provides awareness education; counseling and referral services about alcoholism and drug abuse for members of the Catholic Church and cooperate with other stakeholders sharing similar goals.<sup>42</sup> The office runs field work programs and also in print and broadcast outlining evils that alcoholism has done; from ruining families to declining church active participation. It also presents measures that can be applied to reverse the situation among them rehabilitation of those addicted and engaging local community chiefs from monitoring the underage against the vice.<sup>43</sup>

On the 15/02/2016, the researcher had an interview with the local Ordinary of the Diocese of Nakuru on the trend and his take on Alcoholism in the Diocese. The Bishop Msgr. Maurice Muhatia Makumba assured the researcher that the Diocese is aware of the negative effects being caused by Alcoholism. He cited three measures being implemented. The first being the sensitization of small Christian communities on the dangers through families and parish priests. Secondly engaging the county government on implementing the eradication of poisonous drinks, youth empowerment and skills development through the national youth service, and the jobless

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<sup>42</sup> "Alcoholism in Kenya" <http://www.urbanministry.org/national-catholic-council-alcoholism-and-drug-related-problems-inc> (accessed on 23/03/2016)

<sup>43</sup> KCCB, *Children of the Father; Live in the Light*, Nakuru: St Bosco Printery, 2013.

engaging them in vocational training. Thirdly, he talked of on-going catechesis.<sup>44</sup> In another incidence the local clergy recommends abstinence and witness of life.

#### **4.6 Theologians and the Phenomenon of Alcoholism**

African Religion theologian John Mbiti stated that the Africans are naturally religious that all their life and activities permeate and are linked to God. <sup>45</sup>“Africans are notoriously religious people. From north to south of the Sahara, west and east to the Mediterranean the African people have some form of religious practices that is very vital to their innermost belonging. Their worship is characterized by dance, songs and rhythm. In their life they tend to explain everything in connection to the Supreme Being, so much so that religion permeates permanently into all departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it.”<sup>46</sup>

Pastoral Theologian Segeja in his class on SCC it is evident that; he is a champion of empowerment of the laity, inculturation and formation of small Christian communities as a way of bringing deeper the message of Christ to the lives of the people. He reasons that the rationale for ensuring proper establishment of SCC’s in Africa is to show basic elements of witness to Jesus according to the example in Acts, and the incarnational approaches to the multicultural values of the ethnic traditional communities. This opens up for possibilities for Christians to reach a more permanent commitment to Christ and for the message of the Good News to be more relevant to their lives. It is therefore true that Segeja sees SCC’s as valuable resources of bringing virtues and witness to Christ. This is true with the fight against alcoholism.

#### **5.0. Pastoral Response to the Phenomenon of Alcoholism in Nakuru**

Below are practical and pastoral measures that can be applied by the Diocese of Nakuru and any other ecclesial area in the fight against the phenomenon of Alcoholism.

##### **5.1.1 Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers**

The pastoral response to addiction is to help the youth and community members who are already hooked in the vice is setting up rehabilitation centers that can bring them back to the norm. And for the available centers there is need to equip them with resources both human and financial so that they can be able to offer services to those undergoing this challenge. <sup>47</sup> In addition, concerning students, youth and teenagers involved in the abuse of alcohol the need for improved pastoral work by the church into moral formation, catechesis and re-evangelization. Christian ethics need be an ongoing subject to be taught to young people. Regular pastoral visits and extrapolation methods will help schools, parents and policy makers to assess the dimensions of the problem in their environment and understand their situation in comparison to others. <sup>48</sup>

##### **5.1.2 Pastoral planning and Church Associations**

The need to assist church clubs, catholic women and men associations, YCS and legionaries by providing guidance and consultation on the safe and moderate drinking focusing on community-based initiatives designed to alter the larger environment as it affects the community.

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<sup>44</sup>Rt. Rev. Maurice Muhatia Makumba Interview with the Researcher in Nakuru Town on the 15th/02/2016.

<sup>45</sup> Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Catholic Family: A Source*, 88.

<sup>46</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, London: Heinemann Publications, 1969.1.

<sup>47</sup> Johnson Mihingo Jim, *Assesment of Clinical the Impact of Drug Abuse in Africa Urban Dwellers*, Accra: Jim and Jameson Printery, 2000.93.

<sup>48</sup> Jim James Anderson, *Protestant and Catholics: Drunken Barbarians*, Indiana: University of Indiana, 2015.60.

Pastoral planning will help support parish associations in the sensitization and effectiveness of community-based coalitions in reducing underage, youth and excessive drinking. Coalitions could include parents and community leaders, as well as policymakers.<sup>49</sup> Pastoral planning would require that the fight against alcoholism be enshrined in the catechesis program.

### 5.1.3 Workshop and Seminars

There should be a task force in each small Christian community to sensitize members through seminars and workshops about the dangers and effects of alcoholism and the following recommendations need be emphasized: In the content of message the issue of drinking excessively need be elaborated and its relationship to family life, health and work. This must be with collaboration of a variety of audiences, including locals, church, state, and national organizations interested in the welfare and good of society.

### 5.1.4 Role of Alcohol Anonymous and Support Groups

There is need to strengthen and support groups working for the good of the people in Nakuru. A major group for concern is alcoholic anonymous groups who have both open and closed meetings. Closed meetings are for alcoholic anonymous members only, or for those who have a drinking problem and have a desire to stop drinking. Open meetings are available to anyone interested in Alcoholics Anonymous program of recovery from alcoholism.<sup>50</sup> The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking and encourage others to stop drinking.<sup>51</sup>

### 5.1.5 Moderation and Self Control

Moderation theory argues that, according to the biblical and traditional witness, (1) alcohol is a good gift of God that is rightly used in the Eucharist and for making the heart merry, and (2) while its dangers are real, it may be used wisely and moderately rather than being shunned or prohibited because of potential abuse.<sup>52</sup> Moderationism holds that temperance self-control in all of one's behavior is a virtue; however, abstinence is the biblical norm if possible for Christians and alcoholism is discouraged.<sup>53</sup>

### 5.1.6 Parental Guidance for Youth and Children

Drinking alcohol, celebration and merry making undoubtedly is a part of African culture, as are conversations between parents and children about its risks and potential benefits of alcohol are required. Information about alcohol can seem contradictory. Alcohol affects people differently at different stages of life, small amounts may have health benefits adults, but for children and adolescents, alcohol can interfere with normal brain and social development. Alcohol's differing effects and parents' changing role in their children's lives as they mature and seek greater independence can make talking about alcohol a challenge.<sup>54</sup> Parents may have trouble setting concrete family policies for alcohol use. And they may find it difficult to communicate with

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<sup>49</sup> Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, Nairobi; Hippo Books, 2008, p 370.

<sup>50</sup> Patrick Maweu Makewa, *Developing Youth*, Nairobi; Uzima Publishing House, 2008, pp 36-40.

<sup>51</sup> Robert R. Gonzales, Jr., *The Son of Man Came Drinking*, Kentucky:Reformed Baptist Seminary,2010.5.

<sup>52</sup> Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Catholic Family: A Source Book*,64,

<sup>53</sup>Robert R. Gonzales, Jr., *The Son of Man Came Drinking*,7.

<sup>54</sup> Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Catholic Family: A Source*,37.

children and adolescents about alcohol-related issues. Nevertheless, it is parent's role to guide and nurture their children and youth in a right way.<sup>55</sup>

### **5.1.7 Government Regulation and Policy**

The national drug and nicotine regulatory agency NACADA needs to do much more concerning the available deadly local made brews, tobacco and drugs. There should be more alcohol and nicotine's on the market than foodstuffs. The law needs to bite to prevent minors and youth from accessing alcohol and drugs. In this way society and especially small Christian communities in the diocese of Nakuru will be saved from the health, economic and social risks brought about by alcohol. Since humans are biologically designed to overeat and drink the government must apply to unhealthy drinks the kind of regulations that have been so successful in limiting drugs and their consumption as well as their availability. This will mean sensitization of the communities, law enforcement officers as well as schools, families and the youth.<sup>56</sup>

### **5.1.8 Personal Responsibility and Courage to say "Enough"**

Despite government efforts to regulate alcoholism, even though the church continues to preach and discourage people from excessive consumption of alcohol and even if addicts are taken for rehabilitation.<sup>57</sup> The major part and work remains with the ability and willingness of the individual affected by alcohol. Even though, the community, family and school has a big role in combating the vice from among its members the big responsibility remains with the individual. Effort must be done on by the person him/herself to say enough to the vice and to inculcate the virtue of courage to say NO to alcohol and drug abuse.<sup>58</sup>

### **5.1.9 Job Creation and Sports Activities**

The government, Church and private sector needs to prioritize youth activities and empowerment, when the youth are employed and busy they will not take much time in bars. And those in school and employed it requires the role of their loved one especially parents, as well as personal effort. Sports activities in the school and out of school can also help channel the energy of community members from going all day long in the bar.<sup>59</sup> These may not be sufficient ways to curb alcoholism. However, teamed up with other measures the vice can be lessened.<sup>60</sup>

### **5.1.10 Re-Claiming the Moral Self**

Human beings have been created for God and by God; in addition they have been endowed with a moral and natural law. The law is written in each and every human being whether Christian or not. The law dictates that a person is to pursue the right and avoid the bad. In each decision, activity and thought there is always that voice within. It is also true that for many the law of conscience has been suppressed by maybe environment, secularism, lack of reflection on personal life and also by challenges that comes with life situations. There is need to re-claim this religious gift and make use of it in the context of self-regulation. However, in the context of Christianity. It is

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<sup>55</sup> Squeglia, L.M.- Jacobus, J.,- Tapert, S.F., "The influence of Substance use on Adolescent Brain Development, in *Journal of Clinical and Neuroscience*, 40(1):31-38, (March 2009).

<sup>56</sup> Johnson Mihingo Jim, *Assesment of Clinical the Impact of Drug Abuse in Africa Urban Dwellers*, 91.

<sup>57</sup> Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Catholic Family: A Source*,37.

<sup>58</sup> Johnson Mihingo Jim, *Assesment of Clinical the Impact of Drug Abuse in Africa Urban Dwellers*,103..

<sup>59</sup> Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Catholic Family: A Source*,66.

<sup>60</sup> Pearson Anderson, *Management of Drinking Problems*, Copenhagen: World Health Orgarnization,Europe Press,1996. 345.



outward clear that alcohol ruins one's life and family thus the imperative to stop it. However, this is a process and not easily possible for the addiction, that is why there is need for loved ones to join the process of healing.<sup>61</sup>

#### **5.1.11 Role of SCC's in the Fight against Alcoholism**

Improving and forming SCC's will help us in the fight against the vice of Alcoholism. Given the fact that SCC's is a way of being Church and a pastoral priority for effective evangelization. It's the domestic church headed by Jesus Christ thus they must be formed and then empowered to take up its evangelizing role. This can be done through the active role of the family. Each member of the family must see him/herself as his brother's keeper. The ecclesial area of Nakuru is a stake if SCC's do not take up its role. It's therefore imperative to argue that SCC's are very important avenues of improving the image of the church and strengthening pastoral ministry in the Diocese. Members and leaders of SCC's working together with priests can do a lot to the fight alcoholism through dialogue and the proclamation of the Gospel of life. In areas where SCC's are not operational there is need for their formation and training leaders there.

#### **5.1.12 Alcoholism is A Sin**

Alcoholism is as a result of personal sin and thus requires God's intervention through praying. Personal failure and weakness, which develops into a bad habit, tend to be the natural cause of action. Those people who believe that it is a person's choice to become alcoholic hold this position. Therefore, "if one chooses to become an alcoholic" he or she is directly responsible for the consequences that come with alcoholism. Embracing the position that alcoholism is purely sin is not strong enough. Addiction begins as personal sin those results in an obsessive-compulsive disease. It is a sickness that is caused by the sin of voluntary excessive drinking.<sup>62</sup>

#### **5.1.13 Pastoral Counseling Programs**

If the war on alcohol abuse is to be won, the Kenyan clergy must become more knowledgeable about alcoholism and alcoholic people and their families. However, in a situation where church members are moralistic, judgmental, and condemning toward the recovery of the alcoholic it will thus hinder the fight.<sup>63</sup>

#### **5.1.14 Empower the Role of NACADA Kenya**

National Campaign against Alcohol and Drug abuse (NACADA) agency need to work closely with all stakeholders to fight the vice. This could be through executing its constitutional mandate which to focus on reduction, involving providing preventive education, public awareness, life skills, treatment, rehabilitation and psycho-social support to the general public. It also contributes towards supply suppression through policy formulation and capacity building.<sup>64</sup>

In the same respect other measures can also help us fight the disease of alcoholism are; the indispensable role of other religions, political commitment, the role of "alcoholics anonymous" support group, pioneer catholic and pro-life campaigners. Legal and enforcement agencies need

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<sup>61</sup> Ronald Lawler, et al., *The Teaching of Christ on Christian Living*, 99.

<sup>62</sup> Douglas Waruta - Hannah Kinoti, eds., *Pastoral Care in African Christianity*, Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 1994.19.

<sup>63</sup> "Church and State in the Fight against Alcoholism" <http://www.ipsnews.net/2015/03/kenya-struggles-with-rising-alcoholism/> (accessed on 12/03/2016)

<sup>64</sup> NACADA Kenya <http://www.presidency.go.ke/index.php/nacada> (accessed on 14/03/2016)

to do their job. The need for skills, improved job creation, public awareness, educational campaigns and improved life style that will prevent incidences of alcohol abuse.<sup>65</sup>

## 6.0. Conclusion

The Church promotes abstinence from strong spirits nevertheless moderate drinking for believers is permitted but more still the magisterium urges Christians that God's answer is abstinence if possible unless for purposes of medicine, celebration and worship. The one who abstains from alcohol saves him/herself from temptations. Every alcoholic begins his or her downward path with a "moderate" drink. The church should never condone or allow that first step by teaching that it's permissible to drink a little wine. Rather, the church should uphold the clear position of the Word of God, knowing that Jesus is the Word made flesh and come to dwell among us. God's point with alcohol is clear, and it always has been. Alcohol is unholy and unclean. Partaking in the worldly drink can only compromise God's high standards in a human being created in God's image. Effort on all stake holders is required by government, family and Church.

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<sup>65</sup> Douglas Waruta - Hannah Kinoti, eds., *Pastoral Care in African Christianity*, 39.

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