

ALCOHOL ABUSE AMONG CHRISTIAN STUDENTS AT KALAY UNIVERSITY

Kham Sian Muang and John Buchanan

Abstract

This research investigates alcohol use and abuse among Christian students at Kalay University in terms of causes, effects and solutions. When Christian students come to Kalay University, some start drinking alcohol, often to excess, and with significant negative consequences. A mixed method research approach was used, involving both quantitative questionnaires and qualitative in-depth interviews. While the effects of alcohol abuse are well known, the research identified an important theme entitled “freedom” as one of the main causes; that is, Kalay University has few rules and students have considerable freedom regarding how they behave. Regarding solutions, a key result is the proper preparation for young people leaving home and moving to a new and often “free” environment. It is suggested that this preparation requires intentional discipleship from both parents and the church.

Keywords: Alcohol abuse, Christian university students, Myanmar.

Introduction

Kalay University is a public higher education institution located in the city of Kalay in North East Myanmar with a student population of some 5,000 students. Kalay is on the edge of Chin State where a large proportion of the population are Christian. The student population at Kalay University is mainly comprised of two main people groups – Chin and Bamar.

Alcohol abuse has increasingly become a problem among students at Kalay University¹, though this study focuses only on Chin Christian students. Alcoholism is a global issue and a leading cause of premature death and disability, ranking with heart disease and cancer. It is a family disease in the sense that families can be affected socially, economically, spiritually, physically and emotionally. Churches

Kham Sian Muang is an alumnus of MEGST who finished his Master of Theology in February 2020. **John Buchanan (PhD)** is a New Zealander and is a faculty member at MEGST where he has been serving for seven years. He is head of the Pastoral Studies Department. John has had a varied career – in corporate planning and business consulting, as a university lecturer in the Management School at Waikato University and as head pastor of a local church. He has published 24 articles in his career, with a focus on decision making.

¹ Personal observation of first author.

and parents have not been able to adequately address this problem. Christian parents send their children to Kalay University to be well-equipped for a brighter future, but increasingly some students become alcohol abusers and that bright future is not realized.

The purpose of this investigative research was to understand the effects and causes of alcohol abuse by university students with a view to developing a missional and effective response to this problem. Understanding the involvement of Kalay churches with university students and their perception of alcohol abuse was also part of the research.

The paper is comprised of four main sections. Section 2 describes the problem background and reviews relevant literature. Section 3 addresses the research methods used and Section 4 presents and analyzes the findings. Finally, Section 5 provides a discussion of the main findings with some possible solutions that have the potential for lasting impact.

Background

The use of alcohol and wine in particular is variously mentioned in the Bible, positively and negatively. A positive example is found when Melchizedek blessed Abram². Drunkenness, that is drinking alcohol to excess, is consistently viewed negatively.³ It is a widespread problem worldwide.

Alcohol Use in Zomi (Chin) Culture

Zu is an alcoholic beer historically drunk by Zomi (Chin) tribes on special occasions. A pot of *zu* drunk together symbolized peace between two parties. Socially, it represented a proposal of give and take, of love and joy⁴. In the practice of ancestor worship, the village leader who led the ritual ceremonies would drink from a cup of *zu* and then spit it out as he invoked the ancestors' spirits. To forbid drinking *zu* in the pre-Christian Zomi (Chin) society was to reject a significant cultural practice.

² Genesis 14:18; see also Psalm 104:15 where wine gladdens the heart of man.

³ For example, Noah (Genesis 9:20-21) and Lot (Genesis 19:32-35). Romans 3:13 and Titus 1:7 condemn drunkenness.

⁴ Chin Khua Khai, "Dynamics of Renewal: A Historical Movement Among the Zomi (Chin) in Myanmar" (PhD diss, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1999), 79–80.

With the coming of the missionaries and the Christian faith to the Zomi (Chin) people, their indigenous belief systems became regarded as evil as drinking *zu* and other cultural practices were forbidden by the missionaries⁵. Since then, Christians in the Zomi (Chin) communities have largely avoided drinking *zu*, with tea becoming an alternative. However, Kham has observed that even today Zomi (Chin) culture remains strongly connected with *zu* and drinking alcohol remains deep in the Zomi (Chin) identity and culture, with some Christian families quietly drinking *zu* at social gatherings in their homes⁶.

Alcohol Abuse – Causes, Effects and Solutions

While the focus of this section is on young people and university students, there are well documented general effects of alcohol abuse regardless of the age of drinkers. Hearn identifies four general effects of alcohol abuse. Firstly, alcohol abuse typically has a negative effect on the lives of all family members and is commensurate with a move toward poverty. Secondly, children are often the main victims, especially when both parents are addicted to alcohol. Thirdly, drinking alcohol does not give peace but is often a source of strife and conflict. And finally, alcohol abuse damages the brain and nervous system, resulting in lowered efficiency, a slowing down of reaction-time, and reduced will power⁷.

Abuse of alcohol is not necessarily the same as alcoholism. Alcohol abuse is alcohol consumption (in low or high frequency) which has significant and recurrent adverse consequences. Alcoholism, however, is a chronic disease with a physical and/or psychological dependence on alcohol.⁸

In a Myanmar context, Pau suggests the following causes of alcoholism among young people. Young people use alcohol to be free from shyness and to find courage and confidence. Alcohol is now as available as tea and increasingly is being

⁵ Cung Lian Mang, “Sociological and Pastoral Response to the Problems of Alcoholism in the Thantlang Community” (MTh diss., Myanmar Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, 2016), 1–2.

⁶ Cin Do Kham, “Historical Values and Modes of Leadership in Myanmar: Assessment of Roots of Values Among Christian Leaders in Yangon” (DMin diss, Oral Roberts University, 1994), 99.

⁷ Aubrey C. Hearn, *Alcohol and Christian Influence* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1957), 49–91.

⁸ Alvarado Parkway Institute, “What Is the Difference Between Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism?” *Alvarado Parkway Institute*, December 13, 2018, accessed May 23, 2020, <https://apibhs.com/2018/12/13/what-is-the-difference-between-alcohol-abuse-and-alcoholism>.

used with meals at social gatherings. Loneliness, unemployment, unfulfilled ambitions, a lack of purpose and a family history of alcoholism can also contribute to alcohol abuse among young people⁹.

Alcohol abuse and dependence is recognized as a growing problem among college and university students in many parts of the world. A search in November 2019 on Google Scholar between 2000 and 2019 for “college students” and “alcohol abuse” found 70,000 articles on this topic. To address the problem of alcohol use and abuse by university students, US colleges have acted in several different ways, as reported by Knight¹⁰. These include implementing early identification programs in students, increasing the skills and awareness of students who live on campus and limiting access to and consumption of alcohol. They also recommend that colleges provide a diagnostic health assessment for students caught violating alcohol regulations or otherwise identified as engaging in heavy drinking. However, when it comes to solutions, Lian observes that elders, young people and every tribe, nation and clan have tried to prevent alcoholism and drug abuse, but all have failed¹¹. There are no easy solutions to this problem.

Research Methodology

This research on alcohol use and abuse among Kalay University Christian students used structured questionnaires followed by in-depth interviews with a variety of respondents, including both Christian and non-Christian students at Kalay University, Kalay University teachers, Christian leaders and staff from two rehabilitation centers. This is a mixed-method approach.

Quantitative Surveys

Quantitative research methods deal with numbers and things measurable with statistical analysis can identify relationships among variables in order to explain, predict and control phenomena¹². In quantitative research, the

⁹ Ngul Khan Pau, *Youth Culture* (Dimapur, India: Nagaland Institute of Development Studies, 2012), 54–56.

¹⁰ John R. Knight et al., “Alcohol Abuse and Dependence Among US College Students,” *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 63, no. 3 (2002): 263–270.

¹¹ Mang Za Lian, “Hong Netum Khamtheih Guihtheih [The Drug That Ruins Life],” in *Tongzang Evangelical Centenary Magazine 1905-2005*, ed. Cin Do Piang (Tongzang, Myanmar: Tonzang Christian Fellowship, 2005).

¹² P.D. Leedy, *Practical Research: Planning and Design* (New York: Macmillan, 1993).

questionnaire is usually filled in by the respondents themselves without the researcher being present, however for this study the questionnaire was personally administered by the first author.

The questionnaire used for this study comprised 30 closed questions using a 5-point Likert scale where 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree and 5=Strongly Agree. There were also three qualitative (open) questions. A pretest was carried out with five students which resulted in some changes. Fifty-seven questionnaires were then completed by current students at Kalay University during their summer break, through personal contacts.

To test for a significant difference, a standard t-test with assumed unequal variances was undertaken. Where the probability of the t-statistic is less than 0.05 (that is, a 95% confidence level), one can be reasonably confident that respondents either agree or disagree with the statement.

Qualitative Interviews

The purpose of these in-depth qualitative interviews is to understand the perspectives of different groups on alcohol abuse by Christian university students. The interview data was analyzed by using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes following the approach of Clark and Braun.¹³

The qualitative interviews for each group varied. Appendix 2 contains the interview questions for Christian leaders, as an example and also explains the selection of respondents. The different groups interviewed; staff from 2 rehabilitation centers and 1 recovered alcoholic, 13 Christian leaders from five major denominations, 24 Christian and 2 Buddhist students attending Kalay University, and 2 Kalay University teachers – a total of 44 interviews. All interviews were conducted in the Burmese or Zomi language and an audio recording was made of each interview, in addition to notes being taken. Interviews were subsequently transcribed into English and then the thematic analysis was undertaken. This was done manually by reading notes from each interview, identifying common responses, and then carefully combining them into themes for each main group. Each respondent was coded to maintain privacy and confidentiality.

¹³ Victoria Clarke and Virginia Braun, *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners* (London: SAGE Publications, 2013), 120–123.

Findings and Analysis

This section discusses the findings from the analysis of the data collected.

Quantitative Survey Findings and Analysis

Fifty-seven students completed the questionnaire: 19 males and 38 females. Almost 90% of these students were undergraduates and all described themselves as Christian.

Table 1 following shows the mean scores for all questions which used the 5-point Likert scale sorted by question number. Of the 30 questions, respondents' mean responses were agree for 24 questions (80%), were undecided (unsure) for 4 questions (13%) and disagree for 2 questions (7%). Further t-tests were used to compare the responses of male and female respondents to see if men and women respondents had different views on student use of alcohol. It is commonly thought that male students drink much more alcohol than women students and, therefore, women respondents may have different experiences relating to alcohol use and therefore different perspectives. However, it was found that in only four questions did male and female respondents significantly differ and for two of those differences both genders were undecided (Q13, Q17). Thus, it appears that male and female respondents have similar understandings. Unsure and Disagree responses are highlighted.

Table 1. Analysis of quantitative survey responses

Analysis of Questions for 5-point Likert Scale						
1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree						
No .	Question	Mean	Std Dev	t-stat		M/F Significant Difference
8	Use of alcohol common at Kalay U	3.86	1.08	<0.001	Agree	
9	Young men drink most	3.88	1.07	<0.001	Agree	
10	Young women drink most	3.09	1.02	0.363	Unsure	

11	Many Christians use alcohol	3.53	0.98	<0.001	Agree	
13	Causes - Habit	3.05	1.12	0.520	Unsure	YES
14	Causes - Availability	3.72	1.05	<0.001	Agree	
15	Causes - Peer Pressure	3.70	1.16	<0.001	Agree	
16	Causes - Forget problems	3.26	1.16	0.090	Unsure	
17	Causes - Solve problems	2.79	1.21	0.190	Unsure	YES
18	Causes - Find happiness	3.72	1.08	<0.001	Agree	
19	Causes - Culture practice	2.68	1.14	0.040	Disagree	
20	Causes - No teaching in church on alcohol	2.14	1.23	<0.001	Disagree	
22	Effects- Poor health	4.29	0.91	<0.001	Agree	
24	Effects- Destroy family relationship	4.24	1.07	<0.001	Agree	
25	Effects- Poor education	4.22	0.83	<0.001	Agree	
26	Effects- Poor economic	4.02	0.87	<0.001	Agree	
27	Effects- Poor social life	4.00	1.00	<0.001	Agree	YES
28	Effects- Poor spiritual life	4.31	1.02	<0.001	Agree	
29	Effects- Not active in church activities	4.07	1.00	<0.001	Agree	YES
30	Effects- Disturb church's peace	3.75	1.08	<0.001	Agree	
31	Effects- Destroy Christian testimony	4.36	1.08	<0.001	Agree	

32	Effects- No commitment to Christian ministry	3.95	0.94	<0.00 1	Agree	
34	Solution- Biblical teaching	3.98	1.04	<0.00 1	Agree	
35	Solution- Awareness by community	4.11	0.92	<0.00 1	Agree	
36	Solution- House visitation	3.86	1.06	<0.00 1	Agree	
37	Solution- Prayer for alcoholic	4.19	1.09	<0.00 1	Agree	
38	Solution- Conduct social support	4.32	0.79	<0.00 1	Agree	
39	Solution- Collaborate with NGO	3.61	1.00	<0.00 1	Agree	
40	Solution- Commitment from Government	4.05	0.92	<0.00 1	Agree	
41	Solution- Showing love	4.07	1.00	<0.00 1	Agree	

In terms of causes, only three of the eight possible causes of alcohol drinking (availability, peer pressure and looking for happiness) appeared to be agreed upon by the majority of respondents, with them being unsure or disagreeing with the other causes. Conversely, regarding all ten effects of alcohol drinking, respondents on average agreed with each effect, which suggests that these effects are valid and have been observed by the respondents. A third group of eight questions addressed solutions to the problem of drinking alcohol and again respondents on average agreed with each solution proposed.

Respondents' perception regarding the percentage of students at KU who use/drink alcohol was also examined. There was a very wide range of views, as shown in Figure 1. This graph shows that almost 50% of respondents thought the percentage of Kalay university students who use alcohol was less than or equal to 10%. This shows a very wide variation and suggests that further study is needed to understand this significant variation in perception. A possible explanation of this variation is that a number of respondents may have had little first-hand experience with or exposure to alcohol use.

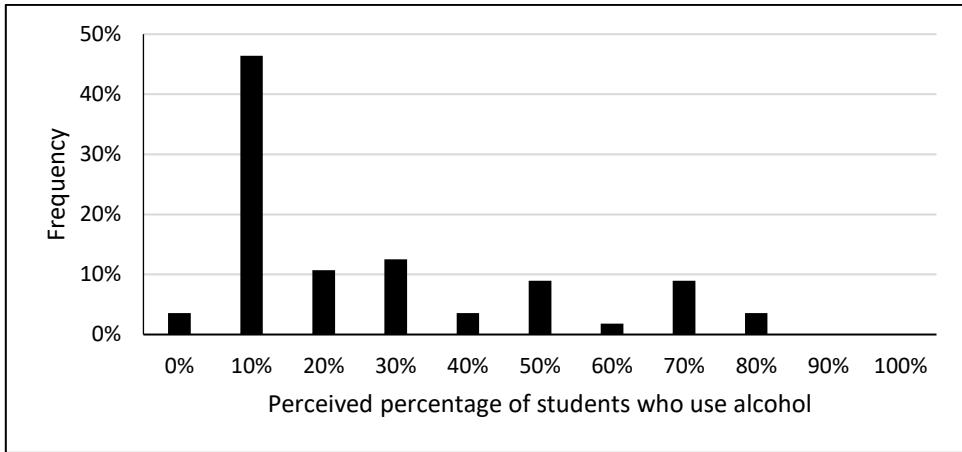


Figure 1. Frequency distribution of the perceived percentage of students who use alcohol.

Qualitative Interview Findings and Analysis

The four different groups of respondents are considered in turn.

Rehabilitation Centers

The rehabilitation centers staff interviews were conducted first. As the staff at the centers had no connection with Kalay University students, little was learned about alcohol use by university students; however, the interviews did provide helpful background information for subsequent interviews.

Church Leaders

The church leader interviews represented 5 different denominations – Assembly of God, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, and Baptist. Four themes emerged from the analysis of responses: a cause, an effect and two solutions respectively. The first theme was *Freedom*, where over half of the respondents described Kalay University as an institution with few rules, hence many freedoms. Respondent CL6 noted that, “...since our society and Kalay University is very free, the use of alcohol is common among students.” Compared with students’ native home (i.e., villages and townships in the Chin Hills), Kalay University has much more freedom which in turn can lead students into alcohol abuse and sexual

immorality. Thus, the freedom afforded to Kalay University students (and the subsequent misuse of that freedom) has contributed to alcohol use and abuse by some students.

A second theme was *Destruction*, that is the destructive effects of alcohol abuse. Respondent CL2 said, “Students lose life-dignity and they become useless for the community where they belong” and Respondent CL7 added that, “Due to drinking alcohol, students are disqualified for higher studies and it brings shame to them.” This destruction includes physical health both internally, such as liver damage and externally, such as motorcycle accidents. Secondly, destruction applies to relationships that are destroyed and the resulting shame and thirdly, it applies to lost educational opportunities.

Collaboration was a third theme where, if parents, teachers and church leaders, especially pastors, work together it was thought by respondents that the alcohol abuse problem should diminish. According to Respondent CL1, “Every Christian and every teacher has a responsibility to help the students. And they must work and pray together to save students from social evil.” The key idea here is collaboration, such as parents and churches working together. It was also suggested that the churches of Kalay could work together to develop a new community or an updated church which is different from the traditional church and relevant to students.

A fourth theme was *Vocational Training*. Respondents CL8 and CL9 advocated vocational training for students which takes place over 1-2 weeks and includes games, moral teaching and ‘survival skills’ for students.

Kalay University Students

This third group of respondents comprised 20 males and 6 females. Four themes emerged from the analysis of student responses which, like the previous section, align well with causes, effects and solutions.

The first theme relates to *Causes* of alcohol abuse. Eight respondents claimed that one of the main causes was feasts and celebrations. Respondents KUS5 and KUS16 said that, “...we drink alcohol with invited guest speakers and also with teachers... on National Day, Water Festival and other times.” There are many such opportunities. Other causes noted by respondents were consistent with the significant causes identified in the quantitative survey, namely peer pressure and finding happiness.

The second theme relates to *Effects* of alcohol abuse. The main effects noted are the same as those agreed on in the quantitative survey and include fighting and conflicts, educational failure and a decline in both physical health and Christian testimony.

Event-Based Mission was identified as a third theme. Nineteen respondents positively mentioned the nights of worship organized by one of the larger churches in Kalay. This church provided a bus for students to come and go from these events and also to Sunday services. From time to time this church also collaborated with University Christian Fellowship to organize event-based missions for reaching university students. Various other Christian groups were also noted as providing and running different events for Christian students.

A final theme of *Similarity and Difference* emerged from comparing Christian and Buddhist students. While they differed in many ways including belief systems, and respect for teachers, both groups of students were seen as very similar in terms of alcohol consumption.

Kalay University Teachers

The final respondents were two female Kalay University teachers. One was Buddhist and the other was Christian. Two general observations from these respondents are of note. First, regarding freedom, students seem to have more free time (compared with high school), and the teachers commented that they do not seem to use their freedom wisely. Also, students who live off campus have more freedom than those who live on campus. Second, it appears that teachers at the university do not really get involved in preventing or discouraging student use of alcohol and, in a few instances, teachers themselves publicly drink alcohol.

Bringing the analysis together, there are three significant themes; freedom (and causes), destruction (and effects), and solutions (including event-based mission). In the final section, these findings will be discussed.

Discussion

The destructive effects of alcohol abuse have been well documented and will not be discussed here. The focus of this section is on causes of alcohol abuse by Christian students at Kalay University. Three important causes have been identified. First is the Zomi (Chin) history of drinking alcohol at celebrations and feasts, a culture which although it changed significantly when the missionaries came

to Chin State, remains to some degree. Second is the freedom from rules in the Kalay University environment, and third is a group of commonly recognized causes which include peer pressure, the pursuit of fun and entertainment (feasts and celebrations) and seeking consolation. This discussion will focus mostly on the second cause and then some solutions will be suggested.

Causes

The long history of alcohol use in Zomi (Chin) culture, particularly surrounding feasts and celebrations, cannot be ignored. Since the missionaries came, alcohol has been outlawed and largely been replaced by tea or other similar non-alcoholic drinks. However, there remains among many Zomi (Chin) people a dispensation toward drinking alcohol. Add to this Kalay University with its own feasts, celebrations and alcohol use and we have a context which echoes the pre-Christian Zomi (Chin) culture.

This brings us to freedom, the second cause. This freedom must be viewed in the wider context of the rule-based upbringing of many young Christian people where alcohol is prohibited¹⁴. Despite the rule of no alcohol and teaching from parents and the church regarding no alcohol use, when Christian students come to Kalay University, to this new and free environment, some start to drink alcohol, apparently ignoring their upbringing and teaching. At Kalay University the village rules are no longer enforced and so, for some students, these rules no longer have any effect¹⁵. Therefore, students are free to drink alcohol, if they so choose.

Simpson argues that rules often do not work as intended, at least not in a lasting or long-term way¹⁶. She discusses the moral boundaries that Christian leaders set up and then, sometimes, violate. Following Paul's argument in Romans 7:7-10,

¹⁴ The research of Cung Lian Mang concerning alcohol use in Thantlang township in Chin State showed how the prohibition of alcohol use in the town when Christian leaders bought the liquor store licenses and closed them down, actually caused more problems to the extent that the situation was only improved when the liquor stores were reopened. In this situation, a prohibitive approach was unsuccessful. This has similarities with the rule-based "no alcohol" approach in most Christian villages in Chin State. Mang, "Sociological and Pastoral Response to the Problems of Alcoholism in the Thantlang Community."

¹⁵ As noted earlier, even in the Chin villages, sometimes the "no alcohol" rule is ignored when there is no senior person around to enforce it.

¹⁶ Amy Simpson, "When Moral Boundaries Become Incubators for Sin," *CT Pastors*, last modified March 25, 2019, accessed March 27, 2019, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2019/march-web-exclusives/when-moral-boundaries-become-incubators-for-sin.html>.

there is a sense in which rules can be a cause of sin. Paul states that he found the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. This can be seen in the story of Adam and Eve in the garden. The first and only rule then given to Adam and Eve was to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. However, first Eve, then Adam, desired the fruit and they ate. The motivation for obedience to rules is typically external; it can be a reward for obedience or punishment for disobedience. Rules do not address the attitude of the heart. So, while rules tend to conform people to certain behaviors while they exist and are enforced – although even then we are disposed toward disobedience – when the rules are gone or not enforced, the desired behavior is much less likely to occur. And, in general, will only occur if they have been internalized.

It is likely that some young people who have gone to study at Kalay University had also not internalized the good rules largely practiced in their villages and so were not well prepared to live in a new environment and to use their new freedom effectively and wisely – at least regarding the use of alcohol. Therefore, the deeper question is how parents and churches can and should equip their young people and so prepare them to transition well into a new environment with its new freedoms.

Among the commonly recognized causes of alcohol abuse, peer pressure is significant in the Kalay University environment as shown in the response to Q15 in the survey. Peer pressure is a feeling that one must do the same things as other people of one's age and social group to be liked or respected by them. Especially in a new environment, new students need friends. In the context of Kalay University, alcohol often seems like a friendship "glue" and subsequently drinking can easily become normal among friends. Also, young people can be adventurous. Many have grown up with a mindset of entertainment which can be experienced at Kalay University in the celebration of special events which, in addition to appointed holidays, also includes farewells and teacher honoring day. Combine this with the Zomi (Chin) culture of alcohol use at celebrations and the freedoms of a secular university, there is considerable pressure and opportunity for new students to drink alcohol. A further cause is drinking alcohol as a way solve or to forget life's problems, as a consolation. Broken relationships are a common example.

Solutions

Alcoholism and alcohol abuse has been a problem throughout the history of the world. The focus here is not on short term solutions, because short term solutions are simply that – they work for a short time but have little lasting impact. Rather, the focus is on longer term solutions which, while more difficult to implement, should in the end be far more effective. A simple illustration is that of a man in a boat which has a hole in it. The man is busy bailing water out of the boat, a solution which does not address the cause, namely the hole in the boat. A better and permanent solution is to fix the hole.

Event-based mission where students are invited and often taken to events such as worship nights and church services has been mentioned. Although event-based mission has positive impacts, often reviving and encouraging those who attend, once the event is over there is no follow up or similar activity to deepen the faith of the attendees, so gradually Kalay University Christian students can lose their motivations and “drift away.” Thus event-based mission may have a positive but largely temporary impact. The structure of these events does not facilitate relationship or the opportunity to discuss things with which a student may be struggling. A solution to this is personal discipleship as a complement to these larger, less personal events. A church member could, for example, intentionally develop a relationship with one student, spend time with them, encourage them and provide a listening ear and help with problems, such as alcohol abuse, that (especially) new students may be experiencing. This is not a new idea. Jesus’ example of discipleship involved spending time with people. He did engage in some large events such as preaching to crowds; however, his focus was on spending time with his disciples. A focus on discipleship through personal relationship is a key component to a missiological response to the problem of alcohol use among Christian students at Kalay University. The vocational training approach of the Roman Catholic churches in Kalay is also a form of discipleship, of spending time with students. It includes games and sports, teaching on the moral life and teaching practical survival skills to students, with an aim to empowering them to take responsibility for their own lives.

However, the main and probably most difficult issue to address is that of “leaving home.” This transition from village to university in a large city can result in many problems, of which the alcohol abuse problem by Christian students

discussed here is but one aspect. Goodwin discusses how churches (and parents) can prepare their young people to leave home and enter a new world of study or work¹⁷. While this is written from a Western perspective, the underlying principle is that of discipleship which, for Christians, must find ways to be worked out in any culture. Training children at home through rules has already been discussed. While this remains important, the argument has been made that while it is necessary, it is not enough. The longer-term solution involves both parents and churches preparing their young people to leave home. How should parents prepare and equip their children for leaving home? How can churches equip parents to do this? While it is appropriate for parents to make rules, they must also be the followers of the rules, for parents are role models for their children. If parents do not keep the rules, the message to their children is unclear. Parents also should explain the reasons for keeping rules. As children get older the goal is for them to understand the purpose or spirit of the rule. And then to choose it for themselves, that is, internal rather than external motivation is more effective. Thus, young people must also, over time, develop a desire of their own to do what is right, a desire that is their own conviction.

Again, solutions center around discipleship. According to Mamo, “Discipleship is an effective educational method for the Church¹⁸,” and it is more than teaching, it is a holistic approach to training. In the context of this research it would undoubtedly help if church leaders could spend more time in relationship with young people, beyond preaching and teaching. Other people besides church leaders, such as older, mature men and women of the church, can also serve in a disciple making role. An important role of the church leader is to model and preach discipleship and to equip parents in discipling their children. Discipleship is a long-term process and parents need to spend time with their children long before those children leave home, because preparation for leaving home is likely to take much more than a talk just before they leave.

¹⁷ Nick Goodwin, “What Next? Preparing Young Adults to Leave Home,” *What Next? Preparing Young Adults to Leave Home* / CCCNZ, September 20, 2019, accessed November 11, 2019, <https://www.ccnz.nz/blog/post/44999/What-Next-Preparing-young-adults-to-leave-home/> See also, Murray Brown, “Prepare: 7 Things to Make Leaving Home a Little Easier,” September 20, 2019, accessed November 11, 2019, <https://www.ccnz.nz/blog/post/44999/What-Next-Preparing-young-adults-to-leave-home/>.

¹⁸ Ermias G. Mamo, *The Maturing Church: An Integrated Approach to Contextualization, Discipleship and Mission* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2017), 30.

A further challenge in preparing young people to leave home is that many parents in villages have little experience of living in an urban setting with its new opportunities for good and evil; therefore, they need additional help to prepare their young people for what they themselves do not know. Guiffrida has examined some of the challenges that students from rural communities face with such a move¹⁹. Rural students also have trouble in moving from a racially and culturally homogeneous home environment to a more ethnically and culturally diverse environment that is characteristic of larger universities. This is the exact situation that many students from Chin villages who come to Kalay University come from a context where there is almost no diversity in terms of race, religion or culture.

This is also a challenge for the Myanmar church. Casual observation suggests that intentional discipleship is not practiced in many churches. Although there is much good preaching and teaching, Christians need help to put the knowledge that they learn into practice – which is where discipleship is needed. Certainly, it is the church that can bring change by first equipping parents to disciple their children and that can only happen when the church and her leaders model discipleship themselves. A rule-based culture is not sufficient to equip young people for their future.

More practically, churches can put a workshop on this topic into the Church calendar at the beginning of each year. The workshop can be organized with three to five families (parents only) led by a resource person using discussion method to help parents to prepare their children for University. Working with a small group should be much more effective, even if the workshop needs to be repeated a number of times.

Church pastoral staff should inspire the vision and passion of young people. This can be done especially through Youth Group where, for example, in a workshop type situation qualified people can help the young people to know their talents and potential and help them prepare for their lives after school. It can include developing a curriculum for equipping young students and based on the developed curriculum pastor can invite guest speakers according to the needs of young people. To prepare students who are considering going to University, church pastoral staff can invite University graduates/respected persons to speak at youth services and, if

¹⁹ Douglas A. Guiffrida, "Preparing Rural Students for Large Colleges and Universities," *Journal of School Counseling* 6, no. 14 (2008): 10, accessed November 11, 2019, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ894785>.

possible, at church services. This will help prepare young people for leaving home well and be better prepared for study and living in a new ‘free’ environment. These kinds of services should be done a year in advance of students leaving home to study in Kalay or elsewhere.

Furthermore, churches in Kalay can enlarge their vision to develop a more relationship-based mission approach for young students, as well as continuing with the good event-based_mission activities discussed earlier. These churches can also (desirably together) run some workshops on the dangers of alcohol use and other the many other distractions new students will encounter. Churches can also organize a workshop for students who are struggling with alcohol by inviting a resource person who has personal experience of using alcohol himself/herself or working with alcoholics and is also respected by students.

In summary, the particular problem of alcohol abuse among Christian students at Kalay University, is not well addressed by some of the common solutions such as rules and telling young people what they should not do. The more general issue is equipping young people, and especially students, for their future. Appropriate biblical teaching in church and at special events is necessary, but as has been argued here, not sufficient. What is also required is a ‘deeper work’, with deliberate development in the lives of young people, with an eye to their future. This requires churches and parents discipling their young people long before they leave home for study. There is also an important role for Kalay churches to go beyond providing ‘church’ for students and actively seeking them out students and continue to disciple them.

Appendix 1 – Quantitative Questionnaire

A research into alcoholism among students at Kalay University. I am Kham Sian Muang a student of Myanmar Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (MEGST) Yangon and I am doing my Master of Theology in Inter-Cultural Studies under the supervision of Rev. Dr. John Buchanan, Head of Pastoral Studies and Professor at MEGST. This questionnaire is to investigate this issue and to understand possible causes and effects of drinking alcohol, and also determine appropriate responses.

Your participation in this research is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time during this study. By completing this questionnaire, you are giving informed consent for the use of your response in this research project. All information you provide will be held in strict confidentiality.

Please indicate on each line an answer that you feel is most correct. There is no right or wrong answer. Your answer is correct if it expresses your true opinion. Therefore, please tick (✓) or give an appropriate answer to the questions below on the causes and effects of alcoholism.

I. Demographic data

1. Your name : _____
2. Gender : _____
3. Age : _____
4. Ethnic : _____
5. Level of education : _____
6. Major : _____ [Eg. Politics, Chemistry]
7. Religion

Buddhism Hinduism Islam Traditional Worshiper Animism Other
 Christianity: Please specify your denomination _____

II. Habit of using alcohol

Please tick the boxes as to how much you agree or disagree with the following statement.

(For most questions 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4= Agree, 5=Strongly Agree)

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. The use of alcohol is common among Kalay University students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Young men drink the most | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Young women drink the most | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Many Christian students use alcohol | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. In your opinion what percentage of your colleagues/classmates use alcohol? | | | | | |

III. What are the causes of an alcohol drinking habit?

- 13. Habit 1 2 3 4 5
- 14. Availability 1 2 3 4 5
- 15. Peer pressure 1 2 3 4 5
- 16. To forget their problems 1 2 3 4 5
- 17. To solve problem 1 2 3 4 5
- 18. To find happiness 1 2 3 4 5
- 19. Culture practice 1 2 3 4 5
- 20. No specific teaching about alcohol in the Church 1 2 3 4 5
- 21. Please list what you think are the three most important causes of alcoholism
(Apart from listed above)
- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

IV. Effects of alcoholism

- 22. Poor health 1 2 3 4 5
- 23. Please list what are the three most common diseases due to the use of alcohol?
- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 24. Destroy family 1 2 3 4 5
- 25. Poor education 1 2 3 4 5
- 26. Poor economic situation 1 2 3 4 5
- 27. Poor social life 1 2 3 4 5
- 28. Poor spiritual life 1 2 3 4 5
- 29. No active participation in the Church activities 1 2 3 4 5
- 30. Disturbs the peace of the Church 1 2 3 4 5
- 31. Christian testimony destroyed 1 2 3 4 5
- 32. No commitment to Christian ministry 1 2 3 4 5
- 33. Please list what you think are the three most important effects of alcoholism
- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

V. Response to solve the habit of drinking alcohol

- 34. Biblical teaching on the use of alcoholism in the church 1 2 3 4 5
- 35. Raising awareness on the causes and the effects
in the community 1 2 3 4 5
- 36. House visitation 1 2 3 4 5
- 37. Prayer for alcoholic 1 2 3 4 5

- 38. Conduct proper social support for the survival of alcoholic 1 2 3 4 5
- 39. Collaborate with NGO working on alcoholism 1 2 3 4 5
- 40. Commitment from Government 1 2 3 4 5
- 41. Showing love to alcoholic 1 2 3 4 5

VI. Seminar on youth, family and alcoholic counseling

- 42. Have you attended any counseling related on alcoholism? YES NO
- 43. Have you attended any courses on family counseling? YES NO
- 44. Have you ever been trained on youth counseling? YES NO

(If yes specify-course level): _____

-Hours: _____ Year: _____

-Name of the Institution: _____

-Any other: _____

VI. Thank you for your sincere participation. If you have any further suggestions: Please write below.

- _____
- _____

Appendix 2 – Selection of Respondents and Qualitative Questionnaire for Christian Leaders

The selection of student respondents followed from a meeting with the researcher and student leaders, who arranged interviews. The two teacher respondents were contacted through a MEGST alumnus. Pastors and Christian leaders were approached by the researcher first by phone call and then by meeting. They were chosen from four different denominations to be representative of the churches in Kalay. Consideration was also given to ethnic differences in order to represent the major sub-tribes of the Chin people.

[The introductions to each of the qualitative questionnaires are very similar to the quantitative questionnaire of Appendix 1 – and have therefore not been included again.]

1. How are university students involved in your local church? Are they active members or just attendees?
2. What are your crucial experiences with alcoholism among your congregation, especially young people?
3. Can you share with me how would you describe alcoholism?
4. What is your opinion on university students using alcohol?
5. How would you define Christian students as different from non-Christian students at Kalay University?
6. Why do you think Christian university students are using alcohol? Then who is responsible?
7. What are the outcomes you find as the result of using/drinking alcohol by your young university students?
8. How your local church is engaging with Christian university students?
9. How do you suggest the church to get more engaged with university students who are drinking and abusing alcohol?