

From A Christian Perspective
can the use of drugs for
recreation and worship ever
be justified?

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JUNKHEAD.

A GOOD NIGHT, THE BEST IN A LONG TIME
A NEW FRIEND TURNED ME ON TO AN OLD FAVOURITE
NOTHING BETTER THAN A DEALER WHO'S HIGH
BE HIGH CONVINCED THEM TO BUY

WHAT'S MY DRUG OF CHOICE?
WELL WHAT HAVE YOU GOT?
I DON'T GO BROKE
AND I DO IT A LOT

SEEMS SO SICK TO THE HYPOCRITE NORM
RUNNING THEIR BORING DRILLS
BUT WE ARE AN ELITE RACE OF OUR OWN
THE STONERS, JUNKIES, AND FREAKS

ARE YOU HAPPY? I AM, MAN.
CONTENT AND FULLY AWARE
MONEY, STATUS, NOTHING TO ME.
'CAUSE YOUR LIFE IS EMPTY AND BARE

YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND A USER'S MIND
BUT TRY, WITH YOUR BOOKS AND DEGREES
IF YOU LET YOURSELF GO AND OPENED YOUR MIND
I'LL BET YOU'D BE DOING LIKE ME
AND IT AIN'T SO BAD

(Alice in Chains)

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Introduction.

That humanity at large will ever be able to dispense with artificial paradises seems very unlikely. Most men and women lead lives at the worst so painful, at the best so monotonous, poor and limited that the urge to escape, the longing to transcend themselves if only for a few moments, is and always has been, one of the principle appetites of the soul.

Aldous Huxley ¹

If Huxley's predictions concerning the future can be seen as superseding the oracles of Orwell (Orwell predicted blatantly oppressive regimes, Huxley predicted control via subtle media manipulation; the loss of truth within a culture dominated by trivial pursuit and the entertainment industry²) then his observations about the permanence of drug use within society can be deemed equally as perceptive.

Societies within the latter days of the twentieth century west have adopted the pursuit of 'artificial paradise' as part of mainstream culture. As Assistant editor of Mixmag- Andy Pemberton says of today's generation:

For people who started going out in the late eighties, drug use is part of the culture. It's so widespread it's not something they want to give up. It's not like the sixties generation where some people experimented then largely gave up.

- Drug culture cannot be attributed to the excesses of youth, thirtysomethings are still maintaining the habit. Today the world trade in illegal drugs represents 8% of international trade, bigger than motor vehicle export,

¹ A. Huxley, The Doors of Perception, 42.

² N. Postman, The People Who Amused themselves to Death, Intro.

producing \$400 Billion worth of income³. As Drug use increases among the majority, consensus of opinion concerning the status of drugs will change. When the Ecstasy related death of Leah Betts was brought to light, the Times produced one parent's response: They had now become aware of a culture 'that previously had been invisible, a world where drugs were good, not bad; normal, not deviant.'⁴

Such a statement is tinged with irony: extremely *visible* is society's accepted use of Drugs such as alcohol and nicotine. This is not due to a decision to choose the lesser of evils that society must become tainted by but pre - dominantly because nicotine and Alcohol were/are the vices of the wealthier sections of society. Perhaps this is a moot point but the Prohibition of Twenties America may illustrate the point. It was a ban placed on all narcotics, when it was lifted, the drugs that were associated with the lower echelons of society remained illegal thus criminalising them within public opinion.

³ K. Williamson, Drugs and the Party Line,28.

⁴ M. Collin, Altered State, 296.

As Matthew Collin correctly surmises:

The dividing line between legal and illegal drugs is largely a social construct, reliant on tradition, morality and culture as much as science and logic, making rational debate about drug use extremely difficult.⁵

In lieu of the prevalent nature of 'leisure narcotic' use within society, the Church desperately needs to present a 'rational debate' on the subject of drugs. Attempts to demonise the subject or ignore it will result in the Christian community, once again, being found voiceless within a contemporary culture that is becoming increasingly more permissive in its attitude towards drugs.

And as conscious altering drugs begin to play a more open role in society what will the Churches approach to them be? As the issue of Homosexuality has proved, changes in the moral majority's consensus of opinion does deeply effect the churches stance on such issues. Will the youth of today's church eventually frown upon the 'legalism' of previous generations with regard to drug use?

This article is something of an attempt at considering the heady mix offered by the cocktail of Drugs and religion. In order to do this I believe it's necessary to first consider the validity of using drugs to further Christian experience i.e. do drugs provide a gateway to heightened spiritual perception. Then, in conclusion, the focus will shift onto possible biblical approaches to the issue of drugs.

**‘Pursuing religion today without using
psychedelic drugs is like studying
astronomy using the naked eye.’**

Timothy Leary

⁵ Collin, State, 297.

Drugs: A spiritual awakening?

New tribes.

The Sixties were born of frustration. The fifties in America had applauded mass consumerism whilst exonerating mass conformity⁶. As the Mc Carthy witch hunts proved, being a social anomaly was a dangerous occupation. For some, though, a rage against the machine was inevitable and out of a need to rebel against the uniformity inherent in American culture, was born a bevy of monsters - the Teenager, the Beatnik and the Hippy.

It could be said that because drugs were such an intrinsic part of this culture their use was synonymous with notions of freedom of expression and freedom of mind. But many came to associate such usage with something more profound: a new age of man; a religious, spiritual and mental evolution that would herald in a golden age of hyper realised consciousness & self awareness. As Allen Ginsberg (A radical poet) said in the Sixties, the new 'wisdom Drugs' brought new perception:

People are beginning to see that the kingdom of Heaven is within them, instead of thinking it's outside or up in the sky and that it *can't* be here on earth....⁷

Psychedelic drugs were seen as the sun rising on a cold world. It was a great awakening and LSD came to be used as the 'love' food of many a new community. One of the greatest appeals of drug taking has always been the community or sub- culture that's formed by the users; a sub - culture that offers a new identity; transcendence beyond the drudgery of normal life and acceptance. In directly paralleling the appeal of religion in this sense, it's no

⁶ J. Stevens, Storming Heaven, 142.

⁷ Stevens, Storming, 210.

wonder that drugs quickly became associated with mysticism, of a sort, and a form of new tribalism.

And thirty years on the religious/ tribalistic/ rebellious appeal of drugs is still evident. The drug may have changed (this time Ecstasy) but the song remains the same. The wild raves on moorlands, set to bombastic bass lines & booming beats & fuelled by MDMA, encapsulated everything that essentially appeals to man about religion. Ecstasy users formed their own creeds though:

We don't care about money, ownership or property...it's our birth right to walk this earth ... (the world) isn't the way you were told, it's about seeing all the things you placed your security in, like wealth and Status, are total shams.⁸

Again, similar to the revolt in the fifties, this kind of 'doctrine' was forged out of a backlash against rampant consumerism:

While libertarian capitalist doctrine elevated consumer materialism to a creed, Thatcherite assaults on collectivism, pursued through a whole range of policies, intentionally created a society that was fragmented and individualised.⁹

So in response to Thatcher's repudiations of notions of society, Youth Culture in the eighties found meaning by creating their own collectives, isolated from mainstream culture.

But it's not just the sense of being united in rebellion and experiment that creates the drug community, it's also the effect of the drug itself that brings people to a new realisation concerning their relationship to society in the first place.

⁸ Collin, State, 203.

⁹ Collin, State, 6.

Many E users describe their first encounter with the drug in ‘conversion’ rhetoric. Irvine Welsh, one of the modern Godfather’s of drug culture said ‘one pill.. and nothing was ever the same again.’¹⁰ It is easy to detect the appeal of the drug and its effects parodies of ‘religious’ experience from the following description of an ecstasy high by another major advocate of the drug (& author of *Ecstasy and the Dance Culture*) Nicholas Saunders:

There was no need to be self- conscious; I had no doubt I was accepted; there was nothing I could do that would jar because everyone else was simply being themselves, celebrating their freedom from the constraints and neuroses of normal life...¹¹

For many , their experience of narcotics paved a way out of the soul deadening experience that is western decadence. In a time when new age spirituality balks against platonic dualism and instead celebrates the body, physical experience often takes on religious import - as in many historic religions. The drug experience is not seen as merely physical but something that alludes to a greater state of conscious. In this sense the spiritual becomes that which is a *heightened* sense of physical experience – entering the realm of preternatural sensation.

A realm which humankind has been blinded to through the numbing of the physical senses: we’re no longer encouraged (or rather lack the ability) to perceive the numinous through engaging the senses. It was Aldous Huxley who sought to advance this view, purporting that psychedelics were the way of effacing the mental block between humans and their perception of ‘Eden’. An issue that’s looked at in depth in the next section.

Mysticism and drugs.

¹⁰ Collin, *State*, 287.

¹¹ N. Saunders, *Ecstasy and the Dance Culture*, 8.

The value of drugs as a ‘spiritual’ experience may be seen as the way in which they help to deconstruct social taboos, reducing barriers between individuals and inviting community awareness (in 1964 it was made legal for the Native American Church, a Christian church formed by Indians, to take Peyote - the cactus plant from which Mescaline is derived- at their communion services). However, as hinted, there were also external social factors that perhaps led to drugs being linked to new found experiences of community.

Though many would say that drugs like Ecstasy kick start such tribal ‘vibes’, staunch defenders of the spiritual aspect of drug use do so on the grounds of the experience being akin to mystical encounters. Objections to such an opinion are seen as a ‘Modern rationalistic Neurosis’ versus ‘Ancient existential cure.’¹² If the Psychedelic experience cannot be interpreted as being directly religious then perhaps it can be seen as a source of inspiration for encouraging a rationalistic 20th century mindset to see things in a radically different light. The appeal of such vision is:

The authenticity of a world where ‘space does not conform to Euclidean geometry, time does not form a continuous unidirectional flow, (and) causation does not conform to Aristotelian logic....’¹³

This is the view that Huxley developed. He saw 20th century humankind as a debased creature stripped of spiritual sensitivity by the onslaught of modernity and its offspring: individualism, consumerism and capitalism. He predicted that humankind would become ‘comfortably numb.’ Deadened by dead architecture and image overkill, humankind could no longer discern the transcendent in their surroundings. Whereas once man had set his

¹² S.J. Reno ‘Casteneda and Don Juan: Some preliminary observations’, Religious Studies, 454.

¹³ Reno, ‘Casteneda’, 454.

days in accordance with the sun, now cities spewed artificial light to produce 24 hour 'days'. Man exerted a certain control over nature thus denying its ability to reflect a God who is above nature.

To highlight this Huxley uses the historical importance of light within religious tradition. Many mystic visions of the Bible and other faiths contain images of precious jewels reflecting divine light, as if the image was born out of an echo of Elysium contained deep within the psyche: 'Aquinas maintained that pure, bright colours were of the very essence of artistic beauty.'¹⁴ Hence the use of stained glass within medieval churches. Now we are immune to the effects of such beauty:

Familiarity breeds indifference. We have seen too much pure, bright colour at Woolworths to find it intrinsically transporting.¹⁵

Drugs provide the stimulus that humankind requires in order to be able to access the 'sublime'. Huxley believed that evolution had effectively extinguished man's ability to perceive the universe with awe and wonder in order to concentrate on the more basic aspects of survival. Huxley also believed that the brain and central nervous system acted as a filter that reduced the flood of sensory data to a manageable trickle.

He also believed that this could be reversed, the brains central function could be circumnavigated and the unlimited potential of 20 billion neurones could be tapped. He assumed that saints and mystics of the past had somehow managed to achieve this, flinging wide the floodgates of the mind.¹⁶ Leary, Huxley's vocal compatriot, attributed the psychedelic experience to the 'nature' of the 'uncensored cortex.'

¹⁴ A. Huxley, The Doors of Perception, 83.

¹⁵ Huxley, Doors, 85.

¹⁶ Stevens, Storming, 73.

Such revelation assumed a universalism amongst all religious beliefs. Mystics and ascetics of the past had used sensory deprivation e.g. as in fasting (causing vitamin deficiency which interrupts the brain's ability to act as a reducing valve¹⁷) and flagellation ('histamine and adrenaline were released while the whip was being applied' inducing shock¹⁸) in order to induce vision filled states. It naturally follows that the nature of such visions is dictated by the facets of an individual's religious belief (brought on by euphoria) and hence are not 'divine revelations' that are peculiar to one particular Deity i.e. all mystic encounters of all religions allude to the same hegemonic truth. The realm they discover is one uniform realm uncovered by drug use it simply becomes interpreted through the mores of the individual's religious tradition – One god: many masks.

Even worship in the church today relies on the ambience of environment and music in order to encourage the worshippers mood. Drugs simply provide a greater inspiration of a similar kind to that induced by the rituals of song & sermon. To boot they also instigate a certain awe of the universe that is missing from contemporary culture. Instead of using icons, symbolism, charismatic speakers and appropriate music could the church not employ something of a more chemical persuasion in order to achieve feelings of awe, unity and empathy?

¹⁷ Huxley, Doors, 109.

¹⁸ Huxley, Doors, 111.

Drugs: Spiritual Confusion?

Why is it.. that in our culture it is legitimate to use certain drugs to repair the body or the brain but not to enhance performance and experience?¹⁹

So asks Rob Draper in an article in ‘Third way’ that examines the hypocrisy of society and the church in legitimising the use of some drugs whilst damning others. Draper also goes on to state that society is full of technologies that are dangerous to our health but that we learn to compensate for the risks taken in employing them e.g. because we use cars we exercise less so we need to start visiting the gym. The argument follows that:

If we ever began to use drugs deliberately to enhance our spiritual experience, we would rely more heavily on other activities, such as social action, to exercise our wills in a Christian way.²⁰

The problem here, as with Huxley’s argument, is in deciding that which constitutes a valid spiritual experience. If contemporary societies’ vague notions concerning spirituality are tantamount to an explanation of that which is true religion, then any experience we have that is abnormal, e.g. mental illness, intoxication etc. can be viewed in a ‘religious’ light. To say that we are ultimately chemical beings and our moods are continually being manipulated by our environment is to suggest that we have no grounds for basing *any* ‘experience’ within an authentic religious context that is peculiar to one faith.

¹⁹ R. Draper, ‘Taboo Technology’, Third Way, 22.

²⁰ Draper, ‘Taboo’, 24.

And so in an age in which people refer to themselves as ‘spiritual but not religious’²¹ there is a huge problem in defining the drug experience as ‘spiritual’. With so much ‘spiritual’ awareness around today what does the term mean?. One researcher discerningly refers to it as a ‘fuzzy’ concept which ‘embraces obscurity with passion.’²²

The phrase ‘fast food spirituality’ comes to mind when approaching this subject and the trends in drug use seem to indicate this. In the Sixties the drug was initially used in order to seek spirituality. Today, although some Ecstasy users have been inspired to seek ‘religion’ in a variety of cults and religions, the half a million people who take the drug every weekend do it more so for kicks rather than anything else.

American monk Thomas Merton warns against the ‘easy pseudo - mysticism of psychedelic drugs’: ‘The root of false mysticism is the yearning ‘to have experiences’ - spiritual ambition is an obstacle to mystic union.’²³ The desire to initiate spiritual experience through drug use itself is anathema to the endeavour to truly know God, as Merton’s quote from St. John of the Cross displays:

In order to come to this essential union of love in God the soul must have a care not to lean upon imaginary visions nor upon forms or figures or particular objects of the understanding; for these cannot serve it as a proportionate and proximate means to such an end; rather they would disturb it and for this reason the soul must renounce them and strive never to have them. (ascent of Mount Carmel,II, xvi, 10)²⁴

²¹ ‘Religion and Spirituality: Unfuzzifying the Fuzzy’, Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 549.

²² ‘Unfuzzifying the Fuzzy’, 549

²³ T. Merton, ‘Foreword’, in The Cloud of Unknowing, ix.

²⁴ Merton, ‘Foreword’, in Cloud of Unknowing, xi.

St. Teresa also distrusted the nature of ecstatic visions on the grounds that ‘for one desiring such visions displays a lack of humility and, for another, imaginary visions are easy for the devil to counterfeit.’²⁵

The drug experience cannot be relied upon to dictate the actual facets of ‘true’ religion - a mistake Huxley and Leary made. The psychedelic experience cannot provide a detailed ‘map’ of the ‘other’ world. The fact that the experience of drug users often reflected their own peculiar heritage should have indicated this. When Ginsberg - a Jew - took Mescaline he had visions of the god molech, when Hubbard, a major financier of the Sixties drug movement, took acid he did so intending to find the Beatific vision associated with his experience as a Catholic.²⁶

For Huxley the meshing of all ‘mystic’ vision, chemically aided or otherwise, into a unified whole was not a problem. It perfectly fitted his notion of *Philosophia perennis* - the idea of one all embracing truth that all mystical experience points to, the proof of this being that there are so many parallels between the experiences of Mystics the world over.

R.C. Zaehner was inspired to write a polemic against Huxley. In *Mysticism Sacred and Profane* he notes that in equating his own Drug experience with the experience of Mystics who obtain their goals by conventional means, he strikes at the heart of any ‘religion that claims to be taken seriously.’²⁷ For he generalises ‘mystic experience’ to a dangerous extent and develops an almost naïve intellectualism that applauds humanism and religious pluralism.

²⁵ J. Kellenberger, ‘Mysticism and Drugs’, *Religious Studies*, 178.

²⁶ Stevens, *Storming*, 92.

²⁷ Zaehner, *Profane*, xiv.

Mystics the world over would never agree that their experience was akin to the experience of mystics from other faiths and certainly there are vast differences between Huxley's objectives and those of more traditional 'mystics.' For them the beatific vision is not simply heightened sensory awareness or an obscure metaphysical experience: for Muslims and Christians alike it is seen as 'a direct apperception of God.'²⁸ Zaehner insists that drugs can in no way emulate or induce a 'higher, theistic experience'²⁹ wherein 'the soul feels itself to be united with God in love.'³⁰ In no way can the drug experience convey the intimations of divine love procured within the parameters of an in depth relationship with God.

Huxley's 'trips' focused on viewing the flux of objects around him merging into a whole expressing universal unity - his view tainted by adoption of Mahayan Buddhist ideas.³¹ Certainly his idea of spirituality suits more the features of certain Eastern religions which are primarily based on the heightened experiences of the individual.³²

Huxley and Leary both understood the world they had discovered to be vast, unknown country in need of 'mapping.' In this light their attempts to posit their experience as a definitive religious one seems contradictory. It is rather like describing what is within the rest of the building whilst standing in the dark in the foyer - a naïve & arrogant presumption. Especially when such assumptions are treated as being equally as valid as those of mystics who have undergone 'heroic struggles of self discipline.'³³

²⁸ Zaehner, *Profane*, 21.

²⁹ Kellenberger, 'Mysticism', 176.

³⁰ Zaehner, *Profane*, 198-9.

³¹ Zaehner, *Profane*, 2.

³² Zaehner, *Profane*, 1.

³³ Kellenberger, 'Mysticism', 175.

If a tree is known by its fruit, then the fruit of Huxley and Leary's work seems to have grown bitter. The drug culture of the sixties did not produce a society full of 'brave new Communities' with aspiring world visions. Ironically it really was wisdom that Huxley was searching for but all the great religious traditions of the world could have taught him that Wisdom is not accessed solely through the realm of Ecstatic experience. They need only have looked to the east in order to discern this:

..the society which most consistently encouraged the use of these substances, India, produced one of the sickest social orders ever created by mankind, in which thinking men spent their time lost in the Buddha position under the influence of drugs exploring consciousness, while poverty, disease, social discrimination, and superstition reached their highest and most organised form in all history.³⁴

As J. Kellenberger writes in an essay on Mysticism and Drugs, the fact that drugs alter perception is not in question but 'it is not similarly clear that they, in themselves, can do anything to remove the blindness caused by self-deception.'³⁵ Mystics such as St. Teresa warned against 'seeking the fulfilment of self-centred wishes under the colour of piety.'³⁶ The gauge of true mystic experience is a marked 'transformation of the self'.³⁷

For the Christian mystic the vision is not the end goal of their quest, it is a by product of the desire to know God and to gain wisdom. As can be seen from drug cultures the world over, the Drug experience cannot instigate or add anything to the desire to know God within a specific sense, i.e. within the context of gaining wisdom or desiring to be united to God in love. It offers no elucidation concerning the supernatural world that cannot be related solely to the subjective experience of the individual.

³⁴ Stevens, *Storming*, 228.

³⁵ Kellenberger, 'Mysticism', 190.

³⁶ Kellenberger, 'Mysticism', 190.

³⁷ Kellenberger, 'Mysticism', 187.

Conclusion: A Biblical Approach?

The sins of Adam, Eve and Cain can be seen as violations of a covenant status with God. They're placed in new worlds new situations, (the former two in Eden, Cain beyond Eden) and are not given carte blanche so they can do as they will but rather are expected to be good stewards.

Devora Steinmetz, in an article on the aftermath of the flood, also includes the drunkenness of Noah as another such violation.³⁸ Each case points to the idea of man needing to be socially responsible in the world he is placed within, whether pre or post fall. The Mother of Lemuel also points to such responsibility in Proverbs 31:1-9 as Kidner's commentary on Proverbs states: this section is 'a cutting reminder that an administrator has better things to do than anaesthetise himself.'³⁹

Paul couldn't have put it better himself and in his letters includes sobriety as a positive feature of elders within the Church. Of course such texts deal with the excesses of drug use. If drugs were used for worship though, it is almost certain that the state sought would be one of inebriation in order to produce the desired effect e.g. there is no way of really moderating the effects of acid. However if a Christian decides to use drugs recreationally, they may, presuming it is legalised, decide to use a drug like Cannabis in moderation. If the church does not criticise the use of Nicotine and Alcohol, both toxins, in moderation it cannot but allow the use of Cannabis as well.

Paul's instruction's aren't confined to elders though. He seems to suggest to the Ephesians in 5: 15 - 20 that the Church has an exemplary role to

³⁸ D. Steinmetz, 'Vineyard, Farm and Garden: The Drunkenness of Noah in the Context of Primeval History', Journal of Biblical Literature, 194.

³⁹ D. Kidner, Proverbs, 182.

play in society, and the use of drugs may in fact be sending negative signals about the freedom the gospel provides.

This passage can be seen in the same vein as Proverbs 31 as Paul is providing wisdom teaching here. He directly opposes the foolish things of the world as linked to darkness: In 1 Thessalonians 5 and Rom 13, Paul links drunkenness to this darkness whereas sobriety is a characteristic of the light - 1 Thessalonians 5: 6-8.⁴⁰

Philo, the greek historian, also identified drunkenness as spiritual folly. Paul expects there to be within believers an 'ethical insight into God's will'⁴¹ and a desire to make the most of their time because the days are evil.

This includes not getting drunk. As Mitton states in his commentary on Ephesians, Paul would have understood the place of drunkenness within Pagan ceremonies and, noting that its effects have been linked to religious ecstasy, he seeks to warn the church from seeking similar types of excess. As perhaps they had done at Corinth.⁴² The temporary satisfaction that drugs provide is not to be sought by the Christian as such a search detracts from their experience of the Spirit and can effectively shut them off from the Spirit's work. Paul's imperative to them is to 'be filled with the Spirit', Paul's pneumatology states that the locus of their focus should be directed towards the Spirit and not elsewhere. Drunkenness is a distraction, whereas being filled with the Spirit is a life giving 'alternative' - as Erasmus states about being filled with the Spirit 'This is a pleasant kind of drunkenness.'

Gosnell's article on Ephesians introduces the idea that Paul may have been referring to Graeco - Roman meal time customs, where people feasted and spent the evening in song or intense conversation. In such situations people

⁴⁰ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 343.

⁴¹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 341.

⁴² Mitton, *Ephesians*, 189.

‘commonly chose abstinence from drunkenness in favour of stimulating, even, religious discussion.’⁴³ And so Paul’s advice maybe of a more practical nature, alluding to community life i.e. the conduct of such feasts. Even on a social level Paul expects the church to act in a worshipful manner, seeking the filling of the spirit to inspire ‘spiritual songs.’

In an age of shallow spirituality the church needs to follow Paul’s advice here. A developed and developing relationship with the Holy Spirit should not just be an integral part of Church life - it is Church life. If people look to Drugs within the church to supplement ‘spiritual’ experience then it points to a lack of understanding concerning the individuals relationship to the Spirit. Churches today have made the mistake of presuming that instances of preternatural experience can substitute for a wider search for Spiritual wisdom that affects the individuals lifestyle. The desire to use drugs to enhance Spiritual ‘experience’ will only add to that error.

In looking at the reason for depression in today’s society, Oliver James deals with the way in which the drug Ecstasy depletes Serotonin levels (the Chemical which suppresses ‘animal behaviour’ and as a side effect produces a sense of well being) in the mind, giving long term E users emotional instability:

Ecstasy causes the problems because it causes the low Serotonin levels. If you wanted to go further back you would say that whatever causes people to take ecstasy is the true cause of the low levels and emotional problems.⁴⁴

The need to use drugs for recreation or ‘worship’ indicates the users dissatisfaction with their normal state. Speaking about the dependency of society upon drugs, Irvine Welsh says:

⁴³ P. W. Gosnell, ‘Ephesians 5:18 - 20 and Mealtime Propriety’, Tyndale Bulletin, 363.

The phrase “getting out of it” springs to mind. Surely if “it” (society) was better, then so many wouldn’t need to get out of it so often.⁴⁵

This is a message the church desperately needs to hear. People are not searching for the pseudo- spirituality that drugs offer but an in- depth communion with the divine that serves to sustain a vibrant, loving community. The Church needs to live and breathe this ideology in order to present the only real alternative to the drug ‘problem’.

⁴⁴ O. James, Britain on the Couch, 34.

⁴⁵ Williamson, Party Line, xii.

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