

Body Care Among Youths and its Influence on Christian Missions Marian

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ABSTRACT

This article explore ethical implication of body care among youth for Christian missions. Descriptive research method was employed as the researcher discussed two major concepts in the work. The article further revealed general characteristics of youths which are other called "Young Adult." The researchers conclude that though body care is not a bad thing if it would be done modestly. However, its abuse/expensive usage among Christian youth may greatly affect Christian mission. Thus, the research reveals that Body care among Christian Youth may affect message delivery; leads to low turn-out for Christian Mission; results to disgrace or unacceptability; makes Christian mission to yield little or no result; and creates distraction or total turn off to the hearers.

KEYWORDS: Body Care, Youths, and Christian Missions

Introduction

The task of mission among Christians is for all and sundry. It cut across all ages at all level in as much as the ages involve have given their lives to Christ. In other word, Christians have the mandate to fulfill the great commission as stated in Matthew 28:19-20 "Go ye therefore", and everybody can be involve in carrying out this so far they have identified with the body of Christ and have pledge to follow Christ. Therefore, Christian mission can be carried out by children teenagers,

youths and adults. This is evidenced in the organization of the Nigerian Baptist Convention like Sunbeam, Girls Auxiliary, Royal Ambassador, Lydia Auxiliary, Men Missionary Society and Women Missionary Union which are primarily formed for mission works. Youth otherwise known as young adult being energetic individuals in Christian group plays important role in preaching the gospel. Meanwhile, there are several things noticeable in youth age which can have effect on mission. One of such is the issue of body care.

There was a case of a group of Christian youth from a particular denomination who went on evangelism. They divide themselves into two and they proceed to preach Christ to the members of their society. From among this people, a number of ladies did not cover their head with flamboyant hair style. Not only this, it so obvious that some of them in the name of caring for their bodies have bleached their skin. When one of the group was trying to minister to a Muslim brother, the person whom they were preaching did not even welcome them at all claiming that if the way they have dressed is the way Jesus they wanted to introduce to him dresses, he would rather die an unbeliever. This causes a great embarrassment for these people and they went back home without achieving the purpose for which they have gone out.

This scenario then raises the question of about body care among Christian youth and its resultant effect on Christian mission. Question such as: Does the way Christian youth dresses in terms of selection of clothes to wear, use of body accessories, uses of makes up and hair styles affect their mission to both believers and unbelievers? The word mission and evangelism will be used interchangeable in this paper. Also, due to scarce resources on body care, the writer result to draw the implication, influence from personal experience.

This paper therefore seeks to briefly describe the concept of body care, discuss characteristics of youth/young adult and

finally state the influence of body care among youth on Christian mission.

Concept of Body Care and Christian Mission

Body care is refers to as process and ingredient or chemical use by men to take care of their entire body. The general objective is to look health and beautiful. Body care could be in form of pedicure (care for legs), manicure (care for hand nails), and skincare (in forms of using cream, perfume and tattoos). Also the uses of jewelries, clothes etc. are part of means by which people take care of their body.

The global sunray of cosmetic market reveals that its cosmetic materials and several other things used on body care have tendency to be increasing annually. The body further made the following assertions due to the analysis of trends present in the global market in the beginning of the 21st century.

- The demand for cosmetics will keep growing fueled mostly by the emerging markets of Asia and Latin America, what will contribute to the creation of the new products, shape new spending patterns and perhaps even establish new beauty canons.
- Global cosmetics manufacturers will have to differentiate their products to adjust them to the expectation of their new customers originating from different non-western cultures and believing differently.
- Skin care is a segment with the biggest growth potential. It will remain the flagship segment on the cosmetic market over the next few years.
- The deciding factors for market success will be mass cosmetics sale. They will be setting the tone for the entire market. Growing awareness of cosmetic being

almost as good as prestige cosmetics will facilitate the growth of the masstige segment.

- The distribution structure is changing as well as supermarkets and hypermarkets as well as on line sales channels increases their stops in the overall market.

New product launches are based in an increasing way upon advanced research and technologies. On the other hand, there is a growing demand for organic products manufactured in a sustainable way, often according to the fair trade philosophy¹

Christian Missions

Generally, the word mission means an important official assignment/job that a person or group of people is given to do.² Thus Christian mission is an assignment given by Christ to His followers to proclaim the gospel which comprises of His birth, life, death, resurrection and His second coming. This is otherwise known as evangelism which involves activities of proclaiming the good news of the victory of Gods salvation.³ The Greek name, evangelism is normally translated as “gospel” denoting “the message concerning Christ, and the news that concerns Gods or comes from God”.⁴ Therefore, Christian mission has to do with evangelizing the entire world as clearly started in Matthew 28:18-20.

¹ Aleksandra Lapacluk & Mirosław Loboda, *Global beauty Industry Trend in the 21st century.* (Croatia International Conference 2013)

²A. S. Horuby, *Oxford Advance Learner Dictionary* (6th Edition, Oxford University Press (2001), 753.

³ William J. Hark Jr., *Evangelize, Evangelism,* “*Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Dokers Books, 1996), 216.

⁴ S. Legasse, *envaggeliou. Ecagetical Dictionary of New Testament volume 2, Edited by Horst Batz and Gerliand Scuneirder* (Grand Rapids: William 13 Endmans Publishing company , 1991), 70.

Then Jesus came to them and said “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”⁵

From this “Great Commission” from Jesus to His disciples comes what is referred to as Christian mission. It therefore becomes imperative to bring out peculiarity of Christian mission as against any other type of mission.

First, Christian mission is a command. “... *Therefore Go*” with the authority given to Jesus by God, He commands His disciple to go without exemption. Jesus did not give room for any of His follower to take the mission as optional but a mandate that must be carried out.

Secondly, the mission is to His followers who were called Christian by the people in Antioch after they have thoroughly observed them and found out that they behave just like Christ in character and in ways of life. “*The disciples were called Christian first at Antioch.*”⁶ Corroborating this, Oluwale states further that “the earlier followers of Jesus had observed Him preaching and transforming life, and they had received mandate to preach the good news, therefore they continue Jesus ministry to the world.”⁷ This is stressing importance of a life that is truly influenced and transformed to bring about achievement of the Christian mission. In other word, any life

⁵ Matthew 28:18-20 (New International version).

⁶ Acts 11:26 (New International version).

⁷ Kehinde N. Oluwale. The early church’s Evangelistic strategies and its significance for Global Evangelism In *Global Evangelization and the challenges for contemporary church*. Edts. Michael A. Ogunewu and Adedayo O. Odesola. (Ogbomoso: Publishing Unit, The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary Ogbomoso, 2018), 322.

whose character, dressing, make up, speech does not reflect Christ has nothing to offer when it comes to Christian mission.

Thirdly, the mandate is to the all nation which comprise of all tribes, countries and even all religious. Hence the necessity for youth involvement in this type of mandate becomes imperative because youth/young adults constitute larger percentage of the world population, and they are very energetic, influential to make the great commission realizable.

Characteristics of Youth/Young Adults

The International Council of Religious Education some years ago prepared a test for persons under 35 years of age the following questions like Have you finished schools? Are you married? Are you self-supporting? Have you left your parent home? Are you a veteran? A “Yes” to one or more of these questions would obviously classify a young adult nearly all over 20 years of age. Some even younger than 20 might also qualified. Gleason proves further that an examination of the figure on the enrollment will also help in answering the question: Who is a youth/young adult?⁸ In a study made by the census Bureau in October 1949 in USA, of the 18- and 19-year-old group 25.3 per cent were in school, but of the 20 to 24 age group only 9.2 per cent were enrolled in formal education classes. Therefore the great majorities of young people are over 20 and even three-fourth of those 18 and 19 years of age, are out of school and probably should be classed as young adult. The groupings of adult according to Peter are: Young Adults (25-34); Adults (35-64), and Aged Adults (65 and above).

He further explains that young adult is a comparatively new term because it suggests that they are new at the experiences of behaving like adults.⁹ Although church groups vary as to the

⁸ George Gleason, *Single Young Adults in the Church.* (USA: National Board of Young Men's Christian Association 1952)

⁹ Person Peter, *An Introduction to Christian Education.* (USA: Baker Book House, 1963), 118.

age range of the young adults, the general practice is to include those between the age of twenty-five and thirty-five, thus a ten years span in age bracket. Young adults are youthful and active. They are interested in activity programs and are not satisfied with sitting idly by a spectator, watching other perform. It is observed that young people who have gone to work rather than to colleges or university usually become young adults earlier than those who go to college or university.

On the other hands, American society assumes that by age eighteen, everyone is having reached sexual maturity and the peak of physical and mental capacity. Young adult's years covers age eighteen and thirty four and no one group of characteristics seems to provide an adequate perspective. In contrary, Lee Porter opines that young adult's life span through 18-29 years the age at which major life's greatest ventures and decisions are made.¹⁰

Reasons for disparity in age classification for young adults may be due to societal, cultural, developmental factors which influence which influences both physical and physiological development of adulthood.

General Characteristics of Adult may include the following:

The outward signs of Maturity (Human capacity for normal growth): Dobbins explains that "Most individuals "get their growth" (growth related to adults) between sixteen and eighteen.¹¹ That is, past this age the skeletal frame work does not increase. Feet and hands and head do not grow much larger. Dobbins further explains that "all part and functions

¹⁰ Porter Lee, *Understanding Special Needs of Targeted Group*. (Nashville: Convention Press 1979), 91.

¹¹ G. S. Dobbins, *Understandingn Adults*. (Nashville: Convention Press, 1948), 30.

of the body do not mature at the same rate or reach full development at the same time.”¹²

Mental Maturity: Though man’s body is important, his mind is vastly more important because man’s mental mind is that which separate us from animals. The mind of an adolescent is marked by greater independence, increased depth, heightened capacities for abstract thought, broadened outlook and interest, more creative imagination, and desire for adventure, ideas that often run counter to those of his elders.¹³

Emotional Maturity: In contrast to with the emotional immature, the emotional mature adult has acquired a considerable measure of restraint.¹⁴ Mature emotion in young adult helps to subject any emotional situations under control of intelligence and will. Dobbins further asserts that “normal adults are craves affection, sympathy, appreciation, consideration, kindness, tenderness, and even approval.”¹⁵ They as well experiences deep gratification when they are moved by situations which bring responses of loyalty, generosity, pity, sacrifice, nobility, courage, honour, patriotism, faith, hope, and love.

Social Maturity: Of all living thing, human beings are said to be most dependent upon one another. The chance of survival of a child who is deliberately isolated from parents and other members of the society will be nil or at best such a person would rather behave like animal. Marriage which normally takes place in the middle twenties, introduces the young couple to a new social world.¹⁶

¹² Ibid., 30.

¹³ Ibid., 32.

¹⁴ Ibid., 34.

¹⁵ G. S. Dobbins, *Understanding Adults*. (Nashville: Convention Press, 1948), 30.

¹⁶ Ibid., 36.

Moral Maturity: One of the distinctiveness of adult generally is ability to make moral choices which are will bound on them and privileges to be responsible for the consequences of their choices in life. Dobbins opines “that moral choices ability in adults is of two norm.”¹⁷

Influence of Body Care among Youth on Christian Missions

The truth is that, youth/young adult carry larger percentage among the users and buyer of body care materials. This does not exempt Christian youth because everyone irrespective of religion ideology tends to care for their bodies. While body care is not a bad thing if it would be done modestly, it abuse/expensive usage among Christian youth may greatly affect Christian mission in the following ways:

- **It will affect message delivery.** It is well establish that Christian mission is all about delivery God’s message. Therefore youth with excessive body care mentality may in totality put people off at the point of evangelism. The problem here is that, the youth that is guilty of any of the body make up will find it very difficult to boldly speak against it. Christian youth therefore should be aware that they have the responsibility to light the way; to shine light into dark places, to influence decisions and attitude; to be the salt.¹⁸ Thus, it takes a person with right attitude towards body care to boldly engage in Christian mission. Matthew 5:16 states thus. Salt and light with regards to urban mission, Humson Glenn states that “there is a need for Christian to help men individually and corporately to perceive a “hidden” dimension, which

¹⁷ Ibid., 38.

¹⁸ Wanner B. Ragsdale, Jr. “Crisis piled on Crisis” In *toward Creative Urban Strategies*. George A. Torney (compiler). (Texas: Rondenven Publishing House 1970), 22.

makes human life a whole.”¹⁹ Apostle Paul also declared that *this message which is to be proclaimed in Christian mission is to come not merely in word, but in deed and in power. 1 Cor. 4:20*. In essence, the place of complementing right attitude with Christian mission is of great importance. Corroborating this Jimmy R. Allen opines that “the authenticating claims of Christ cannot be effective unless words result in deeds; and social actions... provides a laboratory concern which verifies the truth of evangelism.”²⁰

- **It could leads to low turn-out for Christian Mission.** Most of the youth who are guilty of excessive body make up or other body care sins have resolved not to involve in Christian evangelism again due to the fact that they don't see themselves portraying the true picture of the person whom they claim to be professing. Thus, youth resulting to paying lip service to Christian value and virtues which they needs to exhibit and proclaim.²¹ Those youth who then finds it difficult to come out for Christian mission can be said to be acting contrary to what the scripture says in Matthew 5:15 *“Neither do we light a candle, and put it under a bush and put on a candle stick and it gives light to unto all that are in the house.”*²²
- **It could result to disgrace or unacceptability.** When youth are too conscious of their body care to the extent that they disregard its implication on their Christian life, they may experience disgrace at the point of

¹⁹ E. Glenn Humson. A Theology for the Urban Mission. In *toward Creative Urban Strategies*. George A. Torney (compiler). (Texas: Rondenvon Publishing House 1970), 38.

²⁰ Jimmy R. Allen, Urban Evangelism In *toward Creative Urban Strategies*. George A. Torney (compiler). (Texas: Rondenvon Publishing House 1970), 40.

²¹ Wanner B. R. 23.

²² Matthew 5:15 (New International Version).

evangelization or total shut down on the part of the hearers. Many Christian missionaries have experienced unacceptability not only because the intended receivers are unreceptive but because the messenger reveals themselves totally contradicting what they are out to preach. Thus, youth must ensure that they take proper care of their body in a moderate ways so as not to experience shame or reproach. Youth should be aware that they do not only represent their denomination but a true identity of Christ. Thus, any disgrace or insult heaped on them is directly on God.

- **It could make Christian mission to yield little or no result.** Especially in the urban cities, the youth have given themselves to excessive body care in terms of the use of body creams; make up, jewelries to the extent that it is difficult to differentiate between believers and unbelievers. Thus, unbelievers who see believers dressing just like them may never see any need for accepting Christ which Christian believers claim to be preached. Those who claim to have known Christ in such an un-conducive atmosphere largely ascribed their salvation to the work of the Holy Spirit. Afolabi while addressing causes for reduction in Fervor for evangelism clearly states that “sinners are not ready to change their ways when Christians are not willing to live as role models.”²³ Therefore, youth becoming a role model in terms of appropriate and modest body care will go a long way in enhancing Christian mission.
- **It creates distraction or total turn off to the hearers.** All kinds of unwelcome body care may put off people from listening to Christian message. It further put Christian

²³ Adenrele Afolabi, Causes and Consequences of decreasing Enthusiasm for Global Evangelization *Global Evangelization and the challenges for contemporary church*. Edts. Michael A. Ogunewu and Adedayo O. Odesola. (Ogbomoso: Publishing Unit, The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary Ogbomoso, 2018), 50.

mission on threat especially among the youth. For example, a self-acclaimed Christian youth who went on evangelism met with resistance from the targeted audience due to his excessive use of body fragrance which he applied in order to curtail his body odour resulted from bleaching creams he was using. Since some of the audience could not adhere feeling, most of them were put off from the message been preached while the person in quote became center of attraction.

Conclusion

Of a truth, body care among youth especially in this post-modern era has a great influence on Christian mission. The fact that the mission is about Christ should guide Christians on appropriate usage of body care. The use of cosmetics and body care accessories must be carefully selected for Christian so as to represent Christ in living and in proclamation. The writer strongly agreed that Christian youths cannot but care for their body but while doing this, the motive for the selection of what clothes to wear, what jewelries to put on, and fragrance to wear should be checked and must be weighted with scripture if it tallies with what the scripture preaches.

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