

The Christian Youth in the 21st Century Church – [Asaolu O. S.](#)

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Definitions

- **Christian Youth** – A young disciple or follower of Christ, usually between adolescence and mid-age, gospel-obedient individuals such as teenagers and young singles/couples [≤ 35 years].
- **21st Century** – This millennium, years 20xx, [our time and era of smart technologies, liberal ideologies, virtual work, online fellowship, etc.]
- **The Church** – The body of Christ, the saved [physically organized as local congregations]

Introduction: Young people are vibrant and energetic; quick to learn and to act. The youths are the life-wire and the future of any organization, more so the church of any age. The challenges and prospects of the youths as well as the nature of church problems and probable solutions in the first century are not radically different from that of this era. ***The Holy Spirit has revealed that the seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation (Rev 1:11; 2:1-3:22) are both factual and symbolic of the Lord's Church; His message is applicable to all local assemblies in any and every century.*** There is much that the youths of now can learn from those of the past especially from ancient times and from the early church, from Joseph/Rebecca or Daniel/Esther or Timothy/Rhoda.

Table 1: Youths have strength and time in their favour

Youths Are Strong Naturally But	Christian Youths are Stronger in Christ
<p>Proverbs 20:29 <i>The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the gray head.</i></p> <p>Ecclesiastes 12:1 <i>Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;</i></p> <p>Isaiah 40:28-30 <i>Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.</i></p>	<p>1 Timothy 4:12 <i>Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.</i></p> <p>Titus 2:4,6 <i>That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children... Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.</i></p> <p>1 John 2:13-14 <i>I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.</i></p>

Thesis: *Same trials and temptations are available in all era, just different packaging. Those who know their God shall do exploits; putting their faith, zeal, knowledge, skills and gifts to advantage.*

If those before us persevered then so should we, and so shall we! The principles used back then to overcome evil are still useful and relevant today. Personal commitment to the cause of Christ remains paramount.

Youth are often faced with choices, to choose between godliness and worldliness. Societal peer pressure projects and promotes vices such as classism, segregation, human philosophy, atheism, cultism, laziness, gambling, drugs, alcoholism, immodest apparel, rudeness, licentiousness, pornography, etc. All these are exacerbated and ‘in your face’ due to ubiquitous social media, TV, billboards and neighbours around us. The church still grasps with persecution and tribulation from without as well as hypocrisy and false teaching from within. As Christians, we should make effort to identify temptations which easily afflict us as individuals (Heb 12:1-2), pray about it (Mt 6:13a), avoid compromising situations (Col 3:5, 1 Cor 6:18), use the word of God as a weapon by knowing and quoting “*it is written*” (Mt 4), be positive and seek way of escape (1 Cor 10:12-13), keep a mature confidant to watch/pray/counsel whether you stand or you fall (Eccl 4:9-10, Jms 5:16-20).

Besides, recognition of the following are necessary:

- Children and youths need to be groomed in an atmosphere of love, where the truth is practiced with sincerity and care for each person demonstrated. Much is impacted by what is seen to be done unto brethren in a congregation than from what is taught as theory (James 1:27; 2:1-3,5-16).
- The youths need to see the adults in church as good examples though Jesus is the ultimate role model (Heb 12:2, 1 Cor 11:1, 1 Pet 5:3).
- People must be exhorted to always put God first (Mt 6:33), to show our love unto God via worship and service, flee from the appearance of evil (1 Cor 6:19-20, 1 Thess 5:22) and to appreciate that not everything which is lawful is necessarily expedient (1 Cor 6:12; 12:23, James 4:17).
- Misconceptions and errors must be corrected, even amongst religious youths (Mt 19:16-22) since the Lord rebukes and chastens those whom He loves (Heb 12:4-10, Rev. 3:19). [For instance, a young man recently disciplined tried to drag the church on *Instablog* but it more or less backfired.]
- Youths must be guided to choose their friends, associates and mentors carefully (1Cor.15:33; Prov. 13:20).
- Young Christians ought to be given opportunities to use and develop their talents and gifts (Rm 12:4-8), suppressing such while recycling a set or clique within a congregation will not engender growth in the long run.
- The young ones cannot afford to be merely present in church while docile, they need to be attentive and alert, not like Eutychus (Acts 20:7-12).
- Those that are entrusted with leadership amongst the youths e.g. as Preachers, Church Secretaries, etc.) should seek the counsel of the aged folks and not be like Rehoboam who only relied on his inexperienced mates (1 Kg 12:6-16).
- Youths must be trained to plan for both their secular and spiritual lives (Tit 3:14, Rm 12:11).

Conclusion: We need to be wary of expending the greater part of our life, energy and resources in running the rat-race and chasing vanities. The older generation must bequeath a conducive environment and pass on the faith once delivered unto the saints. The youth have so much ahead of them to achieve and these are interesting times of advanced human civilization. To whom much is given, much is expected. Let the Christian youths of the 21st century combine their savviness and spirituality to serve in the kingdom with humility and sincerity.