

How (Un) Ethical is Print Advertizing in Nigeria?

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Abstract: *This paper examines the two questions of the popular appeals in Christian advertising messages and the respect by Christian advertisers of the Nigerian laws on advertising. It measures the extent to which these Christian advertisers base their messages on miracle performance and prosperity gospel as well as the extent to which they are compliant with the ethics of advertising practice. The paper is based on the content analysis of a corpus of 340 advertising copies generated by over 50 different Pentecostal churches to sell a variety of religious services, products and ideas in the three southern Nigerian cities of Calabar, Uyo and Porth Harcourt. Using text and visual as units of analysis, the paper demonstrates that most Christian advertisers are progressively embracing questionable paradigms related to advertising on print. The tremendous desire to gain the patronage of gullible Nigerian masses has motivated some of them to exaggerate in their claims pertaining to miracles and promises of prosperity. A number of such too ambitious and “profit-oriented” advertisers mobilize a mix of tools including sensational language and visuals; this in subtle or glaring violation of advertising regulating instruments. From a moral point of view, it may be observed that some of the adverts produced by Christian bodies are in no way different from those generated or designed by their secular counterparts. The desire to represent or employ strong – though questionable – religious imageries and myths has given undue impetus to gross sensationalism.*

Keywords: *Advertising Laws, Posterity Gospel, Miracles, Christian Advertisers, Pentecostalism*

1. INTRODUCTION

The practice of advertising is governed by a wide range of principles, laws, rules and regulations. These rules and regulations are enforced (basically by the government or accredited regulating bodies) to combat unethical practices such as deceptive – and potentially harmful – advertising and mislabeling of products among others. Advertising rules and regulations equally help to ultimately protect the consumers, especially children who are the most vulnerable consumers (Dominick 1993:427; Effiom 2005:98). In line with this, most countries in the world have created or accredited particular bodies to regulate the practice of advertising in their respective national territory. In Nigeria, there exist two of such regulatory bodies, namely the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) and the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC). The first has as vision “to promote responsible and ethical advertising practice, acting as the conscience of society and watchdog for the consumers; whilst managing the needs and interests of stakeholders in Nigeria’s advertising industry” (Nworgu 2011:206-207). These two (above mentioned) regulatory bodies have, in their *modus operandi*, enacted codes (the APCON Code and the NBC Code) which can be considered as the main advertising regulatory instruments in the country (Ukah 2011:54; Ijewere and Obeki 2011, Nworgu 2011, Effiom 2005). Despite the existence of these codes and regulatory bodies, the practices of advertising and marketing in Nigeria are still characterized by multiple malpractices. In effect, highly deceptive advertising and mislabeling are still observed in the marketing campaigns of many Nigerian manufacturers. Ijewere and Obeki (2011: 188) corroborates this view when they observe that a good number of manufacturers, middlemen and advertisers have cultivated the habit of “fixing foreign labels on goods made in Nigeria” or using exaggerative and false advertising in an unscrupulous attempt to mislead consumers. In the same line of argument, Ukah (2011:52) insightfully contends that: “the veracity of media advertising in Nigeria is generally unscrutinized. Product manufacturers and service providers use the media to make unsubstantiated claims about their products and services; yet they are hardly called upon to account for their actions or are charged to court for attempting to mislead public”.

This is a serious indication that, even though the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria has prescribed rules and regulations which advertisers ought to comply with, some media outlets and advertisers “still violate these regulations especially when they are faced with the option of earning extra money and adherence to the rules” (Effiom 2011:47). According to Ukah (2011:48) and Effiom (2005:99) a good number of Christian advertisers (especially the new Pentecostal Churches) are similarly guilty of breaching the rules and regulations of the advertising practice in Nigeria. Such a breaching of advertising laws often occurred when these Christian advertisers embark on aggressive evangelistic campaigns that involve the advertising of signs and wonders and the showcasing of very attractive media packages. This paper evaluates the extent to which religious (Christian) print advertising is (un)ethical in Nigeria looking from the microscope of the APCON Code and the NBC Code. It explores both language use and visual manipulation in order to examine how conscious Christian advertising copywriters are to the various codes of ethics (the law).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper hinges on two theories namely the prosperity gospel theory and the social responsibility theory. The first is considered an American concept (creation), propounded by well known evangelists such as A. A. Allen, Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagin, Kenyon E.W., Oral Roberts, Osborn, T.C. among others. These evangelists so much stressed on the doctrine that material possession (prosperity) is the center of gospel. Indeed, prosperity gospel is based on the theology that, a believer can have – and should aspire to – whatever possession s/he desires. It stipulates that the spiritual and material fortunes of a believer are conditioned by his faith in God and by the kind of material and spiritual sacrifice he makes for God. As Abioje (2004:1) rightly puts it, this theory interprets faith in Jesus Christ to be “a way to obtaining miracles of healing, success in business, and other forms of breakthroughs, such as getting rich, being blessed with the fruit of the womb, getting the right husband or wife, et cetera”.

The prosperity gospel theory is therefore based on such religious maxims as “Jesus Christ has come to bring abundant life and prosperity on earth”, “God does not bless empty hands”, “He who receives a prophet as a prophet will also gain the reward of a prophet” and “you prosper by planting a seed in faith, the return of which will meet all your needs”. Applied to advertising or any other type of Christian communication, prosperity gospel encourages advertisers to center adverts’ messages on prosperity (material possession), associating a service or product advertised to a material and physical well-being. However, prosperity gospel is not without criticisms. Mbe (2002:373) notes that:

By telling the people that material prosperity is provided by a ‘miracle’-working God or, alternatively, through the spiritual law of prior giving, it [prosperity gospel] simply ignores the numerous political and economic problems that have brought poverty to the country. These include corruption, dependency economy, fluctuating prices, deforestation, military spending and overpopulation. This does little or no good in the search for solutions to these problems.

The doctrine implies that only ‘believers’ will prosper materially in society. This in turn does not encourage a wider social responsibility in society, as everyone’s success is a function of his or her personal relationship with God.

The paper also hinges on the social responsibility theory which, originally, is one of the four principal theories of the press. This theory stresses media’s responsibility to the community, stipulating that profit is a secondary consideration to such responsibility. The mass media (the advertising industry inclusive) are therefore expected to be socially responsible for their contents. Information presented in the media – notably in advertisement – is supposed to be accurate and impartial. Facts must be cross checked and efforts should be made by the advertisers to avoid criticizing and tarnishing the image of others unduly. But where and when necessary (in case of violation of these principles), the state could be forced to intervene by licensing, imposing tariffs or taxes or by censoring, banning or closing the defaulting media.

3. REGULATING CHRISTIAN ADVERTISING IN NIGERIA

The APCON and NBC codes contain a number of provisions that deal specifically with the public representation of religion in Nigeria, especially the advertising of miracles and prosperity. In its Section 4.16.1 titled “Advertising of Religion and Related Product and Service”, *The Nigerian Code of Advertising Practice* clearly states that “no religion advertisement shall be seen to try to exploit the weaknesses, handicaps, short comings or state of desperation of members of the public”. This prohibition illustrates APCON’s desire to protect the consumers. The Code further stipulates in its Section 4.16.2 that:

Advertisements/promotions of any religious product or service shall: (i) avoid exaggeration in its claims pertaining to miracles on the adherents of the religion through the use of spurious testimonials likely to deceive the audience; (ii) avoid promise of financial prosperity; (iii) not cast aspersion on any other sect or religion; (iv) not coerce, cajole or otherwise compel anyone to become an adherent of a particular sector belief.

This provision which visibly stresses on hyperbolic and false advertising as well as mislabeling of other religious organizations, is somehow a verbatim reproduction of the NBC Code’s Sections 4.4.1 and 7.5.1a which stipulates that: “a program promoting religion in any form, shall present its claim, especially those relating to miracles, in such a manner that is provable and believable [...] An advertisement promoting religion in any form shall present its claim, especially those relating to miracles, in such a manner that is verifiable, provable and believable”. It is important to note here that the two codes (especially *The Nigerian Code of Advertising Practice*) stress more on religious advertising in audio-visual media living serious aspects of print advertising untouched. Also, they do not clearly state parameters to be considered to determine the genuineness of a miracle, let alone define the miracle. They equally do not define the procedures for the verification of a purported miracle. All these among other limitations of these two documents have caused skeptical observers to view/interpret its provisions as a systematic ban on miracles. Nevertheless, some of the new Pentecostal sects present in Nigeria have exploited the visible inertia of the regulatory bodies to remain bent on using very attractive packages and somehow questionable adverts in their self-representation in the media.

According to Effiom (2005:99), regulating religious communication in general and Christian advertising in particular has always evoked controversy. The controversy is more pronounced when it comes to the transmission of religious broadcast and adverts which claim the performance of miracles. The controversy partially lies on the fact that, to many Pentecostal pastors and faithfuls, miracles represent a daily experience for the “true” Christian since the supernatural can inextricably intervene in his daily life. Basing Christian communication on the performance of miracles is therefore almost unavoidable. Pastors who major in miracles performance even believe the primordial function of signs and wonders are to legitimize a preacher/prophet and attest that he is God sent. Femi Emmanuel, founder of Living spring Chapel International claims that “Miracle is the crux of the gospel. Gospel minus miracles becomes ridiculous. Christianity is the religion of signs and wonders”.

The controversy over the regulation of miracle advertising also lies on the fact that Christian advertisers are serious media controllers in Nigeria, and religious advertising is an important source of revenue to most media houses in the country. The Christian advertisers are most often ready to make monumental financial sacrifices to purchase airtime for their programs, advertorial and jingles. As insightfully noted by Effiom (2005:99), in the area of religious advertising censorship, regulating bodies seem not to succeed because religious broadcast are “great money spinners for the electronic media, and [advertisement] managers are reluctant to yield to any control measures that may rob them of revenue from that sector. And religious groups themselves are ever anxious to pay anything to keep their programs on air”. Indeed, Christian organizations constitute one of the principal advertisers in Nigeria and their advertising represent the main source of revenue to many commercial radio and television stations in the country. Ukah (2011:50) contends that religious advertising is the second highest income earner to the media organization in Nigeria, succeeding to alcohol and tobacco advertising combined. According to Ukah, “religious advert adverts and sponsored programs provide more than 40% of the revenue of both government and privately owned and operated media houses”. The audio-visual media are however not the sole vehicles of Christian advertising messages. Christian

organizations equally invest huge finances in advertising through print media such as magazines, newspaper, billboards and the like. A popular form of print advertising constantly used by these bodies is the mass production and circulation of flyers on the programs they organized. To these advertising and public relation strategies, one could add the printing and placing of catchy banners at strategic (public) areas/places of the town, to systematically inform and invite the public to upcoming religious programs.

4. CHRISTIAN ADVERTISING IN NIGERIA: THEMES AND APPEALS

Advertisers generally depend on consumers' impressions and various stylistic/rhetoric devices to fashion their advertising copies. Some of the most popular figures of rhetoric used in Christian advertising include possibility talk, imagery, rhetorical question, metaphor, logical argument, pathetic argument, three-part lists, possibility talk, imagery/metaphors. In a study on use of language in persuasive religious discourse by some Nigerian Pentecostal preachers, Adedun (2015) note that in most persuasive religious text generated by Pentecostals in Nigeria, "there is a marked shift from conventional/traditional biblical metaphors to socio-culturally determined metaphors that reflect the Nigerian Christian space and ideology". Christian advertisers equally exploit particular emotional appeals to construct and drive their messages home (Endong 2015; Dominick 2011). In general, good advertisers and marketers (Christian or non-Christian) are always conscious of the fact that "consumer behavior is driven largely by emotion. So, advertisements and the shopping experience itself [ought to be] designed for maximum emotional appeal" (*Awake* 2013:8). Quoting Pooler's book titled *Why People Buy Things They Don't Need*, the Christian magazine *Awake* explains that buyers can get so excited while consuming a product or while enjoying a service, so much so that they may actually experience a rush of adrenaline. When the advertiser or marketer senses this emotional state "he can tap into it and take advantage of the customer's elevated arousal level and weakened defenses". This is true to the tendency among Nigerian Christian advertisers to always seek to artfully adapt their messages to the deplorable socio-economic situation of masses and appeal to their emotions. As Magbadelo (2004:15-16) succinctly contends, Pentecostal churches in Nigeria have remarkably been feasting on the psychology of the masses "who genuinely are desirous of relief from their sordid existential realities. [Some of their leaders] pursue their pre-occupation as a commercial venture, and utilize any means to accumulate profits". They therefore successfully use the mass media to advertize miracle and prosperity to millions of unemployed and miraculous/spectacular healings to Nigerians, too poor to afford drugs and genuine medical care. In the same line of thought, Mbe (2002:368) explores some of the reasons accounting for the glaring success of this approach to Christian communication. He insightfully notes that:

When an individual or a group is deprived of certain things considered important to society such as education, food, nourishment, money [...] two religious doctrinal alternatives could be used to help overcome deprivation: (a) the implementation of a doctrine in which some or all of these are considered meaningless or of low value; [and] (b) the implementation of religious doctrines through which these are considered important and can be acquired.

The economic message of the Pentecostals revolves around the above alternatives. Each Pentecostal group adopts either of the two methods as an economic message and for the accumulation of wealth [...] Studies reveal that the new wave of Pentecostal groups have now adopted the second alternative.

There are over three principal appeals that are often explored by advertisers (Christian advertisers inclusive). As *Awake* (2013:8-9) rightfully notes, these appeals can be captured in the three following marketing promises: (i) going for a specific product or service improves life quality, (ii) consumption enhances status and prestige and (iii) going for a specific product or service defines the consumer's identity. The magazine further explains that:

It is natural to want a better life. [And so], advertisers bombard us with messages that all of our desires – better health, security, relief from stress, and closer relationships – can be achieved by making the right purchase [...] Few people will admit that they make purchases to impress others.

However Jim Pooler notes “When people shop, a very important aspect of their behavior is that they are competing with friends, neighbors, coworkers and relatives”. For this reason, ads often show products being enjoyed by successful, affluent people. The message such ads send to the consumers is: “this can be you” [...] A common way we tell others who we are (or would like to be) is through our use and display of material possessions. Marketers know this and work to associate product brands – especially luxury brands – with specific lifestyles and values. (Awake 2013:8)

Christian advertisers in Nigeria mobilize these three appeals in one way or the other (Abioje 2008, 2004, 2003; Adebisi 2014, Adedun 2015). The first promise (that of improving the life quality of the consumer) is often exploited by the Christian advertising messages based on miracle performances and prosperity gospel (profuse, “cheap” and sometimes unfounded promises of material prosperity and health restoration). This type of adverts seems to be the most remarkable in the Nigerian religious ecology. Ukah (2011:48) corroborates this view when he succinctly notes that, miracles have become “Pentecostalism’s ‘unique selling proposition’ (USP)”, that is, the most important product offered religious consumers or something very special and convincing that attracts attention and precipitates the possible “switching of allegiance from one church to another”. Ukah adds that “miracles as USP also provide legitimation for the activities of church owner-founders in the religious media marketplace; it is the proof of their call to mission, the reason for engaging the media”. The prevalence of serious socio-political *dysnomia* – such as poverty, lack of confidence in the political class/system, and the like – has actually composed the hearts of most Nigeria to believe in such promises. As has abundantly been argued, an ordinary Nigerian will prefer the exhortation and prophecy of a pastor to that of a politician (Servant 2003:17). In effect, the apparent (or generally perceived) failure by the Nigerian political class to seriously redress social problems such as unemployment, ethnic and religion discrimination, terrorism and the like has motivated a good number of Nigerian to resort to their gods and to believe more in miracles promised by oracles than given an ear to the various political propaganda. So, most Nigerians will arguably perceive religion (particularly Christianity and Islam) as their messiah.

5. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study is based on a content analysis of a corpus of 340 randomly selected advertising copies, generated by over 64 Pentecostal churches and charismatic groups present or based in Nigeria. The study used “Pentecostal churches” as a general concept to refer to both popular Pentecostal churches such as the Apostolic Church, the full Gospel church, the Deeper Life Bible Church and newly founded ministries. The 340 copies considered were used by the churches under study to advertize spiritual programs such as evangelical crusades, church services, bible conferences, seminars and the like, between 2011-2015 in three cities of Southern Nigeria namely Calabar, Uyo and Port Harcourt. The units of analysis were both text (copy title, subheading, slogan and body) and visuals.

Given the fact that the study sought to measure the level at which these churches base their advertising messages on miracle performance and prosperity gospel (in their appeals) as well as the extent to which they are faithful to the ethics of advertising practice, the study elaborated three sets of variable labels namely: (i) dominant appeals/themes of the advertising copies, (which could be miracle/prosperity or salvation, (ii) the ethical nature of the copies determined by the terms “clean” and “unclean” and (ii) Christian advertisers use of visuals.

Miracle/prosperity as constituting an appeal or theme was reflected in copies that principally feature promises of miracles and material/health prosperity and restoration meanwhile salvation as an appeal/theme was detected/discerned in copies that were principally centered on purely spiritual phenomena such as repentance, conversion, prophecy, perseverance, doctrines and the like. The study equally considered a clean advertising copy to be one which, in both textual and visual definition is conform to the laws stipulated by the APCON and NBC codes. The data collected were statistically manipulated and presented in percentages and in tables 1, 2 and 3 below. These data were also buttressed with relevant images of selected advertising copies.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings reveal that most (over 75%) of the advertising copies considered for the study are relatively clean, that is presented in an ethical manner. Though not dominant, the unclean copies are somehow considerable (representing 25% of the copies considered). This finding somehow contradicts popular beliefs that most Christian advertising messages (especially those placed in audio-visual media) are anchored on the philosophy of cheap and instant miracle as well as prosperity gospel. Such beliefs stipulate that most Christian advertising messages exaggerate their claims pertaining to miracles. Being based on Christian imageries and various religious myths, these advertising copies are popularly believed to capitalize on Nigerians gullibility to make evasive promises of spectacular financial and health prosperity or restoration as well as promises of spiritual power to confront both physical and mystical aggressions. The fact that most of the copies are clean may partially be predicated on the limited extent advertising copies (posters, bills, flyers among others) generally offer, as compared to advertising through the platforms of audio-visual media. In effect, advertising copies (bills and flyers) often have a reduced space which theoretically favors the presentation of information about their services (especially the body of the advert) in a summarized and brief manner. Most often the designers of these copies are compelled to itemize and briefly coined their message. The reduced space is a subtle obstacle to more colored and persuasive statements, which may conversely rather flourish in the audio-visual media.

The findings equally reveal that though most (50%) of the copies sampled for the study are anchored on spiritual myths and centered on salvific themes, up to (60%) of the unclean copies are principally based on advertising miracles and financial prosperity (see Table 1 below). The rest are these relatively unethical advertising copies are centered on purely spiritual themes such as repentance/conversion, perseverance, spiritual growth, comprehension of Holy Scriptures and the like. As has earlier been argued, promises of financial prosperity, restoration and miracles constitute the unique selling proposition (USP) of most Christian advertising and public relation efforts. Pentecostal Christian advertisers really seem to be in serious competition among themselves and with historic churches for proselytes and members. They immensely count on, and artfully mobilize very attractive packages and promises (such as miracle and material prosperity), in a bid to differentiate themselves from historic churches and other Pentecostal churches. Miracles in particular have become evidences of a preacher's divine calling and immense power. The Christian advertisers' emphasis on this phenomena (miracles and prosperity) lies principally on the popular belief among Pentecostals and many religious Nigerians that any Christian experience/activity or gospel preaching/ministering is "invalid" and "non-genuine" unless it is associated with miracles (signs and wonders as popularly called). Advertising miracles is not unlawful in itself; however, the manner in which they are advertised is what matters here. Some copies considered for the study present a number of serious flaws.

Table1. *Dominant Appeal and Themes in Christian Advertising Copies*

Ethical Value	Miracle/Prosperity		Purely Spiritual		Others		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Clean	85	33.33	136	53.33	34	13.34	255	100
Unclean	51	60	34	40	00	00	85	100
Total	136	40	170	50	34	10	340	100

In total violation of APCON Code 4.16.2.i-iv, many (over 60%) of the "unclean" advertising copies actually present relatively glaring exaggerations of claims pertaining to miracle performance, and implicit or explicit promises of financial prosperity (see Table 2 below). A good number of these copies advertisers center their messages principally on unconditional miracle performance and promise of prosperity. They employ craftily worded and attractive titles, captions and spiritual neologisms that may give the readers/viewers the impression that miracles and financial restoration or break through will be inevitable dividends of attendance of the program (see Plates 1, 2 and 3 below).

Table2. *Major Flaws in Christian Advertising*

Appeals/Themes	Exaggeration		Promise of Financial prosperity		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Miracle/prosperity	21	38.18	34	61.82	55	100
Spiritual	13	43.34	17	56.66	30	100
Total	34	40	51	60	85	100



Plate1. Section view of a Christian advertising copy



Plate2. Full view of a copy

However, only few Christian advertisers border to provide (pseudo) evidences of miracle performance. Such evidences often take the form of testimonials/testimonies featuring the names, picture and/or the addresses of the beneficiaries of such divine workings (see Pate 4 below). A number of such advertisers equally place sorts of disclaimers enumerating conditions under which attendants may/should expect and be guaranteed miracles or multiform prosperity. These disclaimers also often endeavor to clarify the reader/viewer on the source and author(s) of the miracles. This is illustrated by one of the advertising copies considered for the study which bears the following disclaimer: “Please note better that the Pastor is not a miracle worker. Jesus Christ is the miracle worker; He is the doer of all miracles. The Pastor is just a vessel in the hand of Jesus Christ. As you come put your faith on Jesus and you will receive your miracle”.

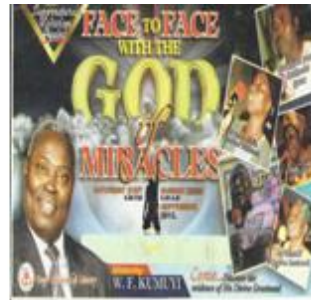


Plate3&4. Copies Promising of Unconditioned Miracles

Visuals are equally employed by the various Christian advertisers as strong persuasive instruments to entice viewers/readers. Most (Over 85%) of the visuals used in the designing of the sampled copies are relatively unquestionable from the point of view of the APCON Code. They dominantly feature faces of ecclesiastic authorities and iconic religious personalities behind the advertised events or services. Findings clearly confirm the reported tendency by Christian advertisers to “advertize/market pastors” more than the product, service or idea on promotion. In most cases, the pastor’s name and caliber (his power and celebrity) are subtly used as constitutive elements of the copies’ USP (Unique selling Proposition). This is further evidenced by the high sounding and relatively ostentatious captions often accompanying some of the visuals (see Plate 5 below).

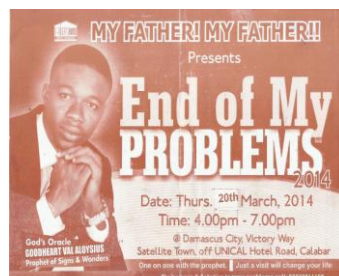


Plate 4. Copy with High Sounding Caption

Findings equally hint at a relatively insignificant (15%) use of sensational visuals (see Table 3 below). Sensationalism is viewed in subtle exaggerations in visual punctuation which are actually aimed at getting the interest of the reader/viewer. Such exaggerations are observable in Plate 6 and 7 below, where relatively “crude” images or visuals are mobilized to represent a number of striking Christian imageries.

Table3: Use of Visuals in Christian Advertising copies

Use of Visual	Normal		Sensational		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Miracles/Prosperity	119	86.23	19	13.77	138	100
Salvation	136	88.88	17	11.78	153	100
Other	34	69.38	15	30.62	49	100
Total	289	85	51	15	340	100

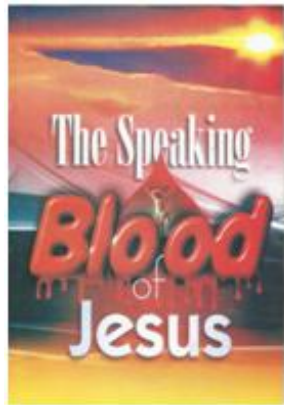


Plate5&7. Copies with “Crude” Visuals

In Plate 6, the designer somewhat sensationalizes the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, by graphically “(re)writing the passion of the Christ with a ‘too audible’ or ‘too visible’ blood. The myth of the multipurpose blood of Jesus Christ is here exploited on a relatively aggressive way to elicit the significance of Jesus’ death and the benefits of His sacrifice to mankind. Similarly, in Plate 7, the viewer is offered the “crude” scene of the piercing of Jesus Christ’s body (His nailing on the Cross). The visual symbolizes (and is a reminder of) the excruciating manner in which the crucifixion of the Christ was effected.

7. CONCLUSION

Christian advertisers are progressively embracing questionable paradigms related to advertising on print. The tremendous desire to gain the patronage of gullible Nigerian masses has motivated some of them (Christian advertisers) to exaggerate in their claims pertaining to miracles and promises of prosperity. A number of such too ambitious and “profit-oriented” advertisers mobilize a mix of tools including sensational language and visuals; this is subtle or glaring violation of advertising regulating instruments. From a moral point of view, it may be observed that some of the adverts produced by Christian bodies are in no way different from those generated or designed by their secular counterparts. The desire to represent or employ strong – though questionable – religious imageries and myths has given undue impetus to gross sensationalism.

The results and observations made in this study call for a more accentuated regulation of the Christian print advertising. Christian advertisers should observe a high degree of self regulation. They should start by seeking to totally be abreast with Nigerian laws on Christian advertising and the universal codes of ethics governing the practices to avoid incidences of sensationalism and clear violation of the law in their advertising efforts. The Nigerian advertising regulatory bodies should equally refine their strategies in sensitizing advertisers in general and religious advertisers in particular on fair advertising practices. Violations of the code of advertising should adequately be repressed and discouraged by all means, irrespective of the defaulters. This is very important as regulatory bodies often give the impression to “bow” to the “influence” of religion and consequently tolerate violations of advertising laws by Christian bodies.

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