

Beauty shop theologians

by Cyneatha Millsaps

Klashique's Beauty Shop is a wonderful place where women come together for the purpose of pampering themselves and gathering with other women for good conversation, laughter, and more often than not, a good dose of current events (a nice way of saying, gossip). But that is not all that takes place in this space. What you will often find each day is a good helping of kitchen table theology.

The beauty shop is where women engage in conversations about their families, communities, and the world. During these conversations women will state personal ideologies as fact, family idioms as the gospel and more than likely will not consider the fact that they are engaging

in any kind of theological discussion. Many women who frequent the shop label themselves Christian, and many conversations reflect how they view their lives through their faith. However, if you ask them whether they are engaging in theological discussion, most would say, "No." But I venture to disagree. This is why.

On any given day, while hanging out in the shop, I have witnessed conversations move from President Obama's policies to trouble with our youth. On this particular day the conversation started this way.

"Did you hear what Rush Limbaugh said about Obama?" said the lady sitting in the chair waiting her turn.

"They will not give Obama a chance; they want him to fail!" exclaimed Kristy.

After some bantering back and forth someone stated, "Well, I am not sure about what Obama is doing either."

"Do we really want a government that controls everything?" said a woman at the washbowl.



Co-owner and hair stylist, Kristy Fields-Hunter, combs a client's hair at Klashique's Beauty Salon as the women's sharing begins.

Photo by Cyneatha Millsaps

There was more conversation about the possibility of big government, and then, the conversation turned back to Obama and his presumed genius. However, they came to the conclusion that in all likelihood there is more to it than “what we see, hear and believe

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is going on with our world leaders.” That acknowledgement raised the question, “Do everyday citizens really have a voice, and do we have any clue of where the country is going?”

A lady sitting under the dryer raised the hood to make sure everyone heard her. Then it happened. She simply stated, “Second Timothy, chapter three. The upside-down Kingdom.”

Everyone turned to face her and a few people nodded their heads in agreement.

She began to elaborate. “What we think is good will be bad and what we think is bad will be good...the world will operate in the wrong direction and believe it is going the right way. Our leaders will guide us in the wrong direction and a few people will try and get everyone to see that we are wrong. But no one will listen, everyone will only be concerned with their own needs and desires.”

With that statement, a whole different tone was set.

The shop Kristy agreed, “You are so right. We were talking about this the other day in church. During the last days, people will be lovers of self...thinking only about their desires and needs.”

The lady in the styling chair said, “Our children are so confused, they do not know if they are coming or going. They make stupid choices, and you can’t tell them anything.”

The lady under the dryer reminded everyone, “That is why we need to pray for our children, our leaders and ourselves.”

The women in the shop nodded their heads in agreement. Then another woman entered the shop. Everyone began their usual greetings of hello and another conversation began.

This is an example of the conversations that take place every

Hair stylist, Nakara Fields, prepares to cut a patron's hair at Klashique's Beauty Salon while they both converse with others in the shop.



*Photo by
Cyneatha Millsaps*

day in beauty shops like Klashique's—women gathering for personal enhancement while engaging in sometimes meaningless dialogue and at other times extremely important conversations about life and faith in God.



These conversations are extremely important; they have a major impact on our lives and there is a lot of good that comes from such conversations. At the beauty shop there are women of different ages, social backgrounds, educational backgrounds and most of all different faith understandings.

Many of the young

Even customers under the hair dryers participate in the sharing that goes on in the shop.

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women under eighteen years of age do not have a lot to say during the conversations but they are listening carefully to what the older women are discussing. Many will ask their mothers, cousins and friends about those same conversations in another setting, so it is important for the conversations to take place.

These conversations cause women to think and research their faith claims. It is not unlikely that someone will pull out a Bible from her purse or a drawer in the shop and look up scripture to prove her point. It is during these conversations that those who do not have a faith community find peace and understanding while they are seeking. Many women will be invited to join various church conferences, choir concerts and Bible studies. In these safe spaces those who are seeking can begin to explore their faith.

Kitchen table theology provides women, young and old, with a safe and fun way to engage scripture, their faith and understanding of who God is, and who they are in God. Kitchen table theology, at its best, will open the door for daily conversations to become dwelling places for our Lord and Savior to tabernacle with us as we struggle with this kingdom and the next. 📖