

Who said Jesus was white?

by Richard Kildare

As I look around, I am pleased to see a good number of Black youths trying to regain their history, becoming political, taking stands on issues, and doing various sorts of things to build themselves a better future. However, I do not believe that many of them are aware of the most destructive force in their struggle. This destructive force is the Westernized conception of Christianity.

I say this because of the large number of Black Christians that exist today. Many of them feel that the image of Jesus they have in their churches, in their homes, and in their cars is pretty much what Jesus resembled. This is not so.

Many Christians do not realize that the image they now see is actually Michelangelo's uncle. Michelangelo used his own uncle as a model as he painted this picture in the sixteenth century for pope Julius the sixth. The immediate answer from many Christians is that it does not matter what color or image Jesus is represented as; the essence of Christianity is in its message. But I would reply that it does make a difference.

After many Black children are born they are taught that there is a God, and that God had a son named Jesus, who was blond and blue-eyed. This builds an inferiority complex in the Black child. Somewhere in the child's development, he or she is going to say 'if Jesus is blond and blue-eyed, maybe blond blue-eyed people are better.' On the other hand, the white child will say 'maybe I am better.' These assertions do not have to be consciously realized — they can be sub-consciously held.

My solution is to tell children that this picture was painted by a gifted artist and is not necessarily the image of Jesus. It is crucial to do this because I am now 22 years of age and have just found this out. I thought at different stages in my life that Jesus was that blond, blue-eyed guy on the wall.

To add to my point, I grew up in a small town in Jamaica where there was not one white person. But every Sunday many of us would willingly go and worship under the blue-eyed Jesus. And I am convinced that this is happening in many places in the



graphic • Leo Campbell

Caribbean. My argument is that worship under this image develops a severe inferiority complex in Blacks.

Children of all colours must know that this is not necessarily Jesus. We must remember they

are not critical thinkers. They must know important facts like this before the age of 22. When I found this out at age 22, all I felt was anger, as I was being lied to all my life, not only I but millions of brothers and sisters.

Defining Blackness? Don't bother

by Dwayne Morgan

One of the greatest obstacles hindering the progress of the Black community is the struggle against racism. This barrier of discrimination and oppression still flourishes — both in our motherland Africa and, sadly, in this multicultural "democracy" we call Canada.

The struggle against prejudiced institutions and oppressive governments requires unity if our goal of equality is ever to be achieved. This is why internal divisions within the Black community are so damaging to our interests.

It is vital that the Black community recognize that our race consists of many cultural backgrounds. Black is not a particular shade or culture, it is a race — a race that carries a long history of courage and pride.

We only harm ourselves when we insist on measuring our Blackness on an imaginary colour chart and create inequalities among ourselves that are akin to the racist tendencies we face in our daily lives. It is these racist distinctions and discriminatory actions which have been detrimental to us in the past and continue to hinder us in the present. We do ourselves a disservice when we sink to this level of ignorance.

Illusions of 'defining our Blackness' are just that — illusions.

Ironically, some wish to create an image of Blackness that illuminates stereotypes and places artificial limitations on our character.

Black is not an attitude or a product of a particular environment. Our personality, our character, our being is the product of many environments and vast experience. We are doctors and lawyers, teachers and professors, actors and truck drivers. We speak many different languages and have numerous interests. We cannot be defined or explained. We are a much too complex people with an intricate past.

Recognizing the full scope of our heritage is necessary for unity. We must realize that African culture is the foundation on which Caribbean cultures and other cultures were built. The cultural development of our ancestors should be viewed as a testimony of the resilience of our people. It is a grave error to exclude the contributions of Caribbean Blacks and indeed all Blacks because some of our ancestors were stolen from their homeland. We must view this action as an atrocity against our race; one that divides us in body but not in spirit.

Although our roots are African the fruits of our ancestry can be seen all over the world. They are seen in the defiance of Nelson Mandela, the valiance of Marcus Garvey and in every struggle, dream and step of

To add to this, there are thousands of Black Christians in South Africa worshipping under Michelangelo's uncle. My friends, this is captivity.

There is something else many Christians are not aware of. From the sixth century Babylonian Talmud, here is a quote:

"Canaan's children shall be born ugly and black. Moreover, because you twisted your head round to see my nakedness, your grandchildren's hair shall be twisted, and their eyes red. Again, because your eyes jested at my misfortune, theirs shall swell; and because you neglected my nakedness, they shall go naked, and their male members shall be shamefully elongated.... Men of this race are called negroes."

One of the problems with this is that there were no negroes in the sixth century: the term was developed by the Portuguese at the dawn of the slave trade in the sixteenth century. In other words, this was inserted by racists.

This was the stuff that John Calvin used to support his doctrine of the inferiority of Blacks. But before there was a John Calvin or a Roman Church, the Church was already established in North Africa.

Ethiopia was a Christian nation 124 years before Rome.

Rome only became a Christian nation after Constantine became emperor. There were seven patriarches in North Africa and twenty-four bishops before there was a pope in Rome.

There are countless other facts that I believe are not realized by many Christians. St. Augustine, one of the fathers of the Christian church, was an African. The first recorded martyrs of Christendom were three African women. Ninety per cent of Genesis and Exodus takes place in Africa. Moses was an African. The slave trade was started by a Christian reverend and by Pope Martin the fifth after 4000.

If Christianity is continued to be censored in this way, then we get doctrines like those of the Mormons. Up until 1978, Mormons preached that Blacks cannot go to heaven. This is not all that long ago. Even today, in 1992, there is a church called 'Jesus Christ Christian Aryans' in Canada.

I feel that if we teach children the truth — or what we believe to be the truth — we do everyone a favor. Because when you find out that someone has been lying to you, the first tendency is to scorn that person, and as a result we have distrust and hate. In other words we are building on a weak foundation, something Jesus preached against.

Malcolm and Martin.

We share a common bond: our hardships, our struggles, our Blackness.

We are brothers and sisters.

discrimination, it will be as a result of our Blackness; not our experience, background or interests.

We are the children of a long line of brave men and women who broke

"The young are the community's sacred — and only — hope, and it is the responsibility of the elders to guide and protect and raise the young — which means, also, and above all, assuming the authority to correct the young. The young do not remain young long. If they find no connection during the brief and brilliant moment of their youth, they will have great trouble finding it thereafter, if, indeed, they ever manage to find it at all."

James Baldwin
Evidence of Things Not Seen

graphic • Rosanne Bailey

When we face a racist individual or a prejudiced institution, we are Black before we are Haitian or Jamaican or African. If we are to face racial

the bonds of slavery and forged a path for us to take. It is now up to us to break the chains of mental slavery, unite and take our place.