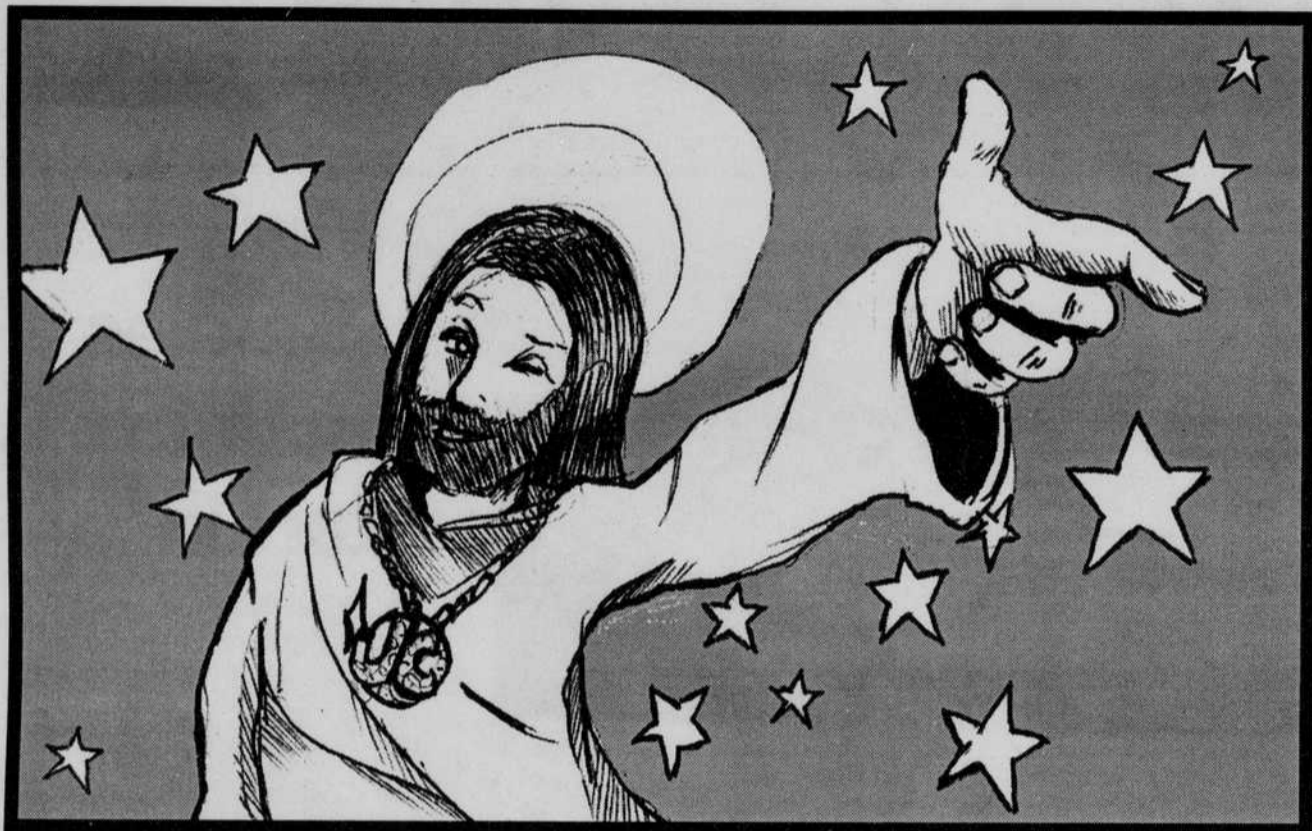


COMMENTARY

Thursday, July 29, 2004



Aaron Sullivan Illustrator

Messiah Chic

Jesus: Fad or Instant Classic?

The August issue of *Cosmopolitan* magazine displayed a "Hot List" to sum up the year 2004 so far. Among the list's categories were celebrity couples, best places for a date and coolest religion. Next to each category is an item that falls under "Cold," meaning it is no longer in style, and to the right of that is the item that falls under "Hot" meaning it's what you should be focusing on to stay updated. I wasn't too surprised to find what was "hot" in the Film Genre category; it seems as if music-based movies have gone out of style and have been shown up by the stream of Biblical box-office hits. The names under the Cultural Icon category did give me a little shock: J. Lo has gone cold and Jesus is now hot. Yes, it is now cool to be Jesus.

He's made it through the hippie '70s, the neon '80s, the grungy '90s, to the technology-ruled millennium— not to mention the Dark Ages, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and that whole resurrection thing after dying the horrific death we all witnessed in Mel Gibson's flick— finally he's number one and he deserves it. Jesus isn't only chic to *Cosmo*, either. Urban Outfitters and other stores feel Jesus is cool enough to sell T-shirts with his face on



PORSCHA COLLETTE CAREY
 WORLD ON A STRING

them with the phrase "Jesus is my home-boy" written underneath. For the Catholic feminist in all of us, there are even pink versions of this shirt with a picture of the Madonna; underneath her face is the phrase "Mary is my homegirl". Apparently, Jesus is the latest shocking fashion trend we American style mavens thrive on. Leave that designer Prada bag in the closet and dust off the Good Book— yes, a Bible will soon be the Chanel of accessories.

Christian music artists like Stacie Orrico, P.O.D., and Switchfoot have been topping the secular charts. Recently, Switchfoot's latest album, "The Beautiful Letdown," reached number 16 on Billboard's Top Twenty Albums chart (June 26 issue). The band's single "Meant to Live" is now

number eighteen on Billboard's Top One Hundred Singles chart (July 31 issue). Even secular artists are softening their lyrics for a more religiously aware audience. Kanye West's latest hit, now number eleven on Billboard's singles chart, is named "Jesus Walks" and the chorus lyrics are: "(Jesus walks) / God show me the way because the devil's tryin' to break me down / (Jesus walks with me) / The only thing that I pray is that my feet don't fail me now / (Jesus walks) / And I don't think there is nothing I can do now to right my wrongs / (Jesus walks with me) / I wanna talk to God but I'm afraid because we ain't spoke in so long" So how long is this fad going to last? I'd like an estimate; is it like bell-bottom pants and disco or the Atkin's diet and low-carb burgers? Perhaps this will be something ongoing, seeing that Jesus "is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow" (Hebrews 13:8) or maybe J. Lo will make a comeback. Who knows? But for now, I'd like to give a big congratulations to Jesus Christ for being the coolest and most chic icon since Michael Jackson (pre-nose job era of course!). Sorry J. Lo, better luck next year. Amen.

porschacarey@dailyemerald.com

Gender equality is relevant to sexual expression, personal identity

In response to "Women should rethink displays of overt sexuality" (ODE, July 1): This essay is interesting, but suspect, in the following respect. Shouldn't men also be required to wear 'modest' clothing? Or, alternatively, shouldn't both men and women wear clothes that reflect how they feel? If they feel like showing their skin, why shouldn't they, of either sex? If they don't feel like dressing in a sexy way, that should be their free choice as well, for both men and women.

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It is a problem, and reflects some rather weird presuppositions to only ask that women be 'modest' — doesn't that assume that only men are interested in the other sex for their sexuality? Of course, everyone should know by now that women are equally interested in men's sexuality and attracted by it — and this attraction of either sex for the other is part of the magic that makes our lives interesting and delightful — gives us the impulse to do great things and makes us feel kind to each other — which seems definitely a good thing.

On the other hand, equality in sexual display is linked to equality in financial and power resources. Thus, if women are forced to please men in order to survive, they will, of course, spend a lot of time and energy in attempting to appear as attractive as possible — that is logical. This probably is the reason why women have spent as much energy as they have in the past on making sure that their appearance is pleasing, as well as adopting a manipulative and insincere attitude toward men. Fortunately, at least in the United States and Europe, women have the opportunity to be financially and sociologically independent of men, so don't have to play an insincere role, and can be honestly loving when they feel like it, or honestly able to leave an oppressive relationship if they feel that is in their best interests.

In this society, it makes as much sense for men to feel 'liberated' by wearing non-revealing clothing as for women to, but this isn't asked for in Susan Goodwin's essay.

It seems to me that an attitude that considers sexual attraction a negative is fearful and anti-life — and is not an attitude that will make our lives happier. Perhaps these attitudes made sense in some previous century, but it is a shame to have them intrude on our present reality.

Amy Hendrickson lives in Brookline, Mass.

Democratic 'tricksters' alienate Nader voters

I was an independent. When what I understood to be a genuine Democrat candidate entered in the race for president, I registered Democrat to vote for Kucinich.

Because Ralph Nader is the only candidate who upholds, what I believe to be Democratic ideals, I am Nader Democrat.

One would think that the Democrat party would want me to remain in the Party and retain my vote for the other Democrat candidates.

While Nader voters chose the independent candidate for president, we usually vote Democrat in the other races.

Astonishingly, the Democrat Party had been doing everything in its power to alienate me. Their attempts to disenfranchise my right to have my candidate for president listed on the ballot is comparable to attempts to prevent Americans of African heritage from voting.

The latest dirty trick by members of the Democrat Party is to clog the Portland convention for Nader to deny Nader voters for exercising their right to vote. This is no a surprising act for supporters of John Kerry, a candidate who is described by

both liberals and conservatives as being to the right of Tricky Dick Nixon.

This dirty trick by Kerry "Demothugs" infuriated me. Therefore, today I unregistered as a Democrat. I expected to vote for the other Democrat candidates running in November. However, anger ignited by the unethical chicanery perpetuated by the Kerry Dirty Tricksters triggered an epiphany.

I knew that since I did not vote for Tricky Dick, it would be illogical and wrong to vote for Kerry, who is to the right of Nixon. I did not consider that both the Republican and Democrat Parties are corrupt, and that it would be illogical

and wrong to vote for candidates affiliated with either corrupt organization.

Therefore, I decided that if Ralph Nader is placed on the ballot, I will not be voting for the Democrats or Republicans in the future.

Also, if the Democrat dirty tricksters have been successful in trashing my right to vote for the candidate of my choice, will I be MAD enough to vote Republican? This would not only deny the Demothugs my votes that they would have received, but cancel out another Nader vote for a Democrat.

A. Max Opus lives in Cottage Grove.

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