

# Religion in the News

## Racism has economic base

BY REV. JESSE L. JACKSON

There are 12 points to the PUSH program. Most of them principles of affirmation and program are related to economic issues. Again, I must remind you that our problem as black and dispossessed people is economic, thus the solutions must be found in economic goals.

Black people were brought to this country as slaves, for economic reasons. During the last decade of the 1700's and the first five or ten years of the 1800's, slavery was increasingly viewed as uneconomic. Abolition societies existed in the South and this was the period when our Founding fathers were suddenly seized by conscience to will to their slaves their freedom; and so



Jesse Jackson

George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and a host of sundry heroes proposed (usually upon their deathbeds) the freedom of their slaves.

The point is that it had little to do with their altruism, and it was generally a relief for hard pressed families no longer able to demonstrate the feasibility of households with vast slave holdings...

Then Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, and slavery not only became useful, it became so profitable that lest there be any question about its propriety, theological rationalizations were devised to support chattel bondage for black people.

Moreover, legislative luminaries like Calhoun actually developed an ideology which supported slavery and encouraged, prevailed upon, poor whites to hate blacks - for economic reasons. They were told that free blacks would snatch their jobs sure as day, and that slave blacks kept their wages depressed thus no blacks were their friends or potential allies.

These arguments were similar to those which we found used against us during the Construction fight in 1969. Whites with wages averaging \$268.00 per week (a sum equal to the monthly grant of a family of four on public assistance in Illinois), were told that blacks wanted their jobs and that some people in the federal government and all the civil rights people wanted to give those jobs to the blacks. So the streets of Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh became a battle ground to vie for the upper hand in a struggle articulated by Calhoun... but premised upon the economic competition of races and classes in this society.

A visit to a jail, almost any jail, will confirm the fact that economic causes are behind most of the crime. Blacks are about 87% of the prison inmate population, and about 80% of the crimes for which they are imprisoned are economic in basis. Men are in for armed robbery, which frequently involves a murder, but the killing was not intended so much as the attempt to secure money. Women are in for prostitution, or petty thievery, such as shop lifting, pandering, illegal gambling and pimping are crimes born of dollarless destitution and so is petty and grand larceny, embezzlement, stock manipulation and income tax evasion are the more elite crimes, but all are economic.

Shakedown and bribery are the direct results of persons seeking to extort money or extract from others - for money. Many of our local jails or correctional institutions are just like high schools; they are filled with children. Their

very lives are detonated by the desperation of their poverty.

We will be waging a War on Poverty in PUSH. The forty million or so people locked out of the economy are not locked out because we do not have enough, but because we have not correctly distributed what we have. If there is any surplus in our labor force, it is artificial. At the present time, every major city and many minor ones in this nation need rebuilding. That task alone would provide the jobs. Moreover, Seymour Melman has done a fascinating study on what we could do with money now employed to maintain the cost of surplus armaments, and that itself is amazing, for example, the schools and hospitals which could be constructed and maintained with that money now used for surplus ships, buildings, machinery, etc.

Again, blacks have a \$45 billion economy, which is considerable to be sure, but we should have one that adds up to nearly \$200 billion since the American economy has moved past the trillion-dollar mark.

A recently published study by a psychologist Dr. Singh, shows that people, any people, prefer work as an incentive to rewards, rather than hand-outs. Welfare is a temporary and necessary expedient but this economy with decent and adequate planning could provide a constructive alternative to welfare. In other words, we are saying that this nation and its economic system have the capacity, not only to feed its people, but to provide ways for them to participate in its productive process with dignity. PUSH intends to move, determined that this goal should be realized.

# Let's Begin . A YOUTH CENTER In Albina



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"He who ain't with me  
-is against me."



Woody Strode is  
**BLACK JESUS**

A Plaza Pictures release. TECHNICAL  
Featuring: Franco Citti, Jean Servais  
Stephen Forsyth Directed by: Valerio Zurlini  
A Sig Shore presentation



Co-feature "The Learning Tree" Theatre opens at 7:00 p.m. weeknights.  
Directed by Gordon Park Sunday = 2:45 p.m.  
Both pictures are rated GP.

Black Jesus, loosely based on the life of the African Revolutionary, Patrick Lumumba.