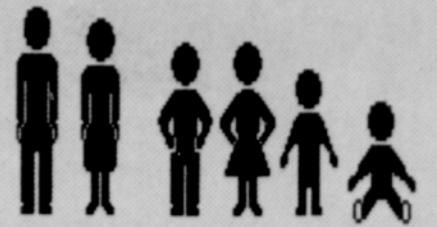


RELIGION

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Scripture
of the Week

St. John: Chapter 1 & 2



Beyond Kwanzaa

by Professor McKinley Burt

In last week's description of the magnificent Kwanzaa holiday and the celebrations of thanksgiving, regeneration and affirmation, I provided some details of a past that illuminates the ages-old African genesis of such spirituality as the world still possesses. It was emphasized that there is no lack of evidence or documentation, of preserved manuscripts, papyri, stone tablets or religious icons -- but that what we do have are arrogant and racist attempts to revise eternal truths and verities. We find that the Great Seals and coins of might but arrogant nations no longer feature black doves grasping olive branches but, instead, present the fierce visage of the Eagle, a refined killer.

Thus, the meaning has been lost from the message of hope and truth that the biblical prophet Isaiah saw rising out of Ethiopia on "buzzing wings." And understanding has been stripped from the tradition of the ancient Greeks who stated that their most sacred of temples at Dodona was founded by two Black priestesses who in the form of doves flew there from the original temple in Egypt. And who is it that is so devoid of feeling and passion that they could listen to the earthy, sing song chants of the black Preacher (King, Jackson, et al), or to the tear-bringing truths of existence imbedded in the soaring lyrics of the Black spiritual--and not wonder how many thousands of years it took to forge these voices. Indeed, it is true that "In the beginning was the word." And that pronouncement is recorded in Africa, long before the Greeks, and long before the Hebrews.

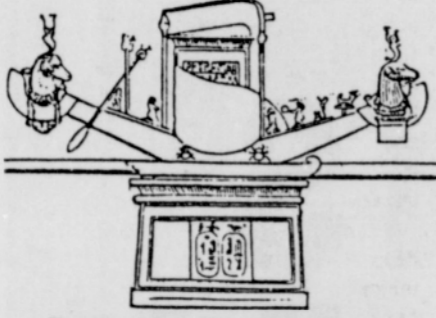
One of the most revered and earliest religious icons is the cross, though by the Judaic period it was being used as an instrument for the torture and crucifixion of criminals and religious dissidents. In the reliable "Archaeology of Christian Art" we find the cross described as "chiefly representative of the ideas prevalent among the Egyptians, namely the source of life, and of hope of a world to come." But when this cross (tau or patibulary) was brought over into the early church around A.D. 377, it was no longer carried in African concept of an "Ankh," the symbol of life. The church fathers added their endowments and we find such inscriptions as this from Rev. 1, 8, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come, the almighty, The African version of this eternal symbol, the Ankh, has been found in excavations all through Egypt, Nubia, Ethiopia and in Western Arabia. On page 141 of the "Metropolitan Museum of Art" companion piece to the King Tut Exhibition, we find exquisite reproductions of copper and bronze hand mirrors in the shape of the Ankh.



Interestingly, in the older books of religious history (written before the turn of the century--and before the African Exclusion), you find that the authors rather honestly and forthrightly present most facts as they are. An excellent case in point is found in "Smith, Dictionary of the Bible," published in 1865. Here, we find that whenever illustrations accompany the text, the engraving is always of the African original. Especially significant is the entry, "Ark of the Covenant." The accompanying picture is that of an Egyptian Ark (after Wilkinson, Ancient Egypt), the exact same vessel found in King Tut's tomb, and as portrayed on temple walls and furnishings throughout the ancient land. Look-alike models are shown as part of African rituals, and other huge examples are replicas of warships or freighters. Another illustration on the same page (from Lamy, Egyptian Mysteries) shows groups of pall bearers carrying arks in a funerary procession. The appearance of the

icon is exactly as described in details of the Temple of Solomon--but these arks came several thousand years earlier.

When we speak like this of rituals and ceremonies I am always brought to mind of the extraordinary and magnificent harvest festival which celebrates an annual reunion of the symbolic goddess Hathor with her bridegroom, Horus, who awaits her at the 6,000 year old city of Edfu, 30 miles downstream on the Nile from the staging area. Satellite television broadcasts may have thrilled you with their coverage of massive religious ceremonies at the Vatican, and you may have been more than impressed by helicopter views of the last royal wedding in England--but these contemporary scenes of western pomp and ceremony are simply beggared when one contemplates the staggering logistics required to stage the fantastic panorama offered by the yearly celebration of the marriage of Hathor of Dendera to Horus of Edfu (Horus is the African god whose eye is shown just above the truncated pyramid of the great seal of the United States--A symbol devised by Thomas Jefferson to portray "the concept upon which America is founded, truth and justice." In Africa the concept was known as Maat; see reverse of dollar bill).



Egyptian Ark. (Wilkinson, Anc. Egypt.)

CORRECTION

Do to the oversight of the composition dept. of the Portland Observer, we failed to add caption lines to two pictures that was in Professor McKinley Burt's story on "KWANZAA: Time To Celebrate African-American Roots, December 13th issue. The two names are Joyce Harris and Gloria Phillips.



Joyce Harris
Coordinator



Gloria Phillips
Coordinator

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This harvest celebration of the cycle of man, nature and spirit began 6,000 years ago and lasted almost 2,000 years. It would begin at Dendera with a week of joyous celebration and praiseful thanksgiving rituals, and then the brides party embarked in beautifully decorated boats for the weeklong journey downstream. At each nightfall there would be stop at a chosen city where the waterborne throng would be joined by more boats, more singers, dancers and musicians, and where more festivities would take place. At each city the local mayor and his officials would join the pilgrimage, all beautifully robed and gowned. Magnificently costumed crewmen rowed the craft to the beat of enthusiastic but disciplined drummers. There was only room for some many boats on the river so hundreds of thousands accompanied the procession by land the entire thirty miles. By journey's end the festive throng could not have fitted

into a dozen Basilicas or Buckingham palaces. For one of the best descriptions of this African Festival, see "Lamy, Egyptian Mysteries."

We are indebted to J.A. Rogers the noted historian for the following information; his quotations have been verified many times.

When the whites came into power they shifted the colors. But as late as 1500 the Ethiopians still depicted their gods and heroes black, and their devils and villains, white. Father Fernandez, a Catholic missionary, who worked amongst them at this time, says, "They paint Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and other saints in black form; and devils and wicked men, white. Thus Christ and his apostles are black and Judas, white. Annas, Calphas, Pilate, Herod and the

(Continued to Next Page)

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Who was born in Portland, Oregon on February 14, 1954, to Geneva Knauls and Robert "Rocky" Carter, died Monday, December 18, 1989 at Portland Adventist Convalescent Center. Ricky died from injuries he sustained in an automobile accident on April 14, 1985.

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