**VIEWPOINT**

By Kasey Carty-Campbell

**Culture Shock: a challenge to examine our presumptions**

February is now past. The month dedicated to a rodent searching for his shadow, single girls feeling justified in eating as much chocolate as they want, and people running naked (Well, I guess they are wearing beads) through the streets of New Orleans, has faded into a new month of excuses to celebrate just about anything.

It seems I forgot to mention something, but since it lasts all month, I guess we somehow overlooked it. Black History Month.

Black History Month was created in 1970 as an extension of Negro History Week, a week in February chosen because it included the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. This month was meant to reflect on the history and teachings of African-Americans.

I don’t know how much of a job we are doing.

I don’t have attended every church and classroom in Jackson, but I would be very surprised if teachers and preachers gave more than a ten-minute-long explanation or acknowledgment of the history of African-Americans.

Henry Martyn Codjoe, a policy consultant with the Alberta Department of Education, Canada, wrote an article titled “Why We Need Black History Month - All Year Around,” in the Ghana Review.

“During one of the Black History Month celebrations here in Edmonton, I engaged in a chat with a gentleman who had come to find out what it was all about. During our conversation he kept asking me why do Black people need a month to celebrate their history? He wanted to know what is Black history? And if there is any history of African people at all to talk or read about,” wrote Codjoe.

I would dare to say that this speaker is giving the opinion of some students on our campus and members of the audience. These same people would also believe that we have overcome the civil rights problems of the sisters and we should get on with our lives. Let’s just forget about it.

What about Matthew 25: 41-43? “Then he will say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take me in, and naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’”

This is not to suggest that African-Americans are the hungry, homeless, sick or imprisoned sector of the American population. But I do see that society has intruded into the church, has avoided the issue of racism, just as those in the pastage avoided the ways in which they could aid society.

I, as a white, middle-class American, cannot undo the racial atrocities committed in the past. However, I can’t be comfortable with the negligence of issues such as interracial marriage, interracial adoption and the gap that exists so openly between the white and black churches.

I have heard people who would say: “Why does it even matter? All people are given the same rights, and people naturally migrate towards people who are like themselves.”

What makes the color of one’s skin the defining characteristic? And have you ever taken the time to ask someone of another race if they feel that they have been given the same rights and treatment as white Americans?

I have a nine-year-old friend who is African-American. One afternoon as we were driving in my car, she told me that she was sick of being dark and that she wanted to be light. I pointed down to my pale, sickly-looking hand and put it up to her, raven-colored hand. I told her how beautiful her skin color was and how she doesn’t want to be pale like me. But her opinion didn’t change; she still wanted to be light.

We can pay our tribute to African-Americans such as Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman for a month and feel good about being culturally aware. But until we appreciate the skin color of a nine-year-old girl, regardless of her race, so that she can begin to appreciate herself, we are neglecting the role that we are called to play in society.

To be perfectly honest, I have no idea how to do this. I can write a lot of words and read a lot of literature, but until it really means something to me, I am just rattling a bunch of rhetoric.

I can only acknowledge my inability to make a difference in anybody’s life without God first making a difference in my own heart so that I can love all people.

Galatians 3:28 tells us that, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Do you really believe this?

**Just for the Record**

By Scott Bryant

**The flow of flautting flesh is invading into music videos. Now, videos don’t have anything to do with the songs anymore and are rather a display of skin. Lopez complains in her recent video about her boyfriend trying to buy her love by rolling around on a beach semi-nude.**

**Madonna cries that music brings people together on her way to a strip club.**

**Music isn’t music anymore. The music industry is becoming more like a Victoria’s Secret catalog with artists turning away from their talent for the sake of showing off their bodies.**

I understand the concept of publicity and that is what all of this is, but in my opinion talent should sell, not sex. Music is supposed to convey a message and artists are interrupting that communication with a distraction from their undressed selves.

On the positive side, not all female musicians are swerving to skin to sell records. To my recollection, Whitney Houston has been producing music for almost two decades now and can rarely be seen showing off flesh for the camera. LeAnn Rimes also doesn’t revert to members of ‘Flashdance’ techniques to make people happy. Even in her cameo in ‘Coyote Ugly,’ she kept it simple with a tank top and pants.

**Although Rhimes doesn’t have the pants.**

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