
Day of Atonement: Afro-Latinos to declare Columbus Day as "The Day of Atonement"

Contributed by Christopher Rodriguez - Blacktino.net
Monday, 20 October 2008

Many Americans celebrated Christopher Columbus Day without considering the historical implications of the 500-year celebration, of the "so-called discovery" of the Americas. This was the "beginning of the end" for the millions of indigenous peoples, who were already living in the Americas, who did not survive the European legacy of slavery and disease.

I would like to propose to all Afro-Latinos to declare Columbus Day, as The Day of Atonement, in dedication to the ancestral Women of African and Indigenous descent, brutally victimized by the colonial exploitation of the Americas by the Conquistadores, and other representatives of the Spanish Crown.

The offspring which resulted from the union between the conquistadores and women of color, created a racial hierarchy of color that to this day, is evident in the vocabulary of many Latin Americans words such as mestizos, mulatos, trigueño, jabao etc. Since Spanish and the Portuguese explorers rarely brought their families with them during their voyages, many women were forced to become sex slaves, prostitutes and some even became Christian wives.

However, there is a prevailing cultural myth amongst many modern Hispanics and/or Hispanofiles that Latin American culture is largely color blind, due to the inter-mixture of the races at a much grander scale, than their North American counterparts. Spanish colonialism allowed individuals the option of purchasing their freedom from slavery, once they repaid the debt incurred when they were purchased as slaves. Thus, they were able to achieve their full humanity, along with their descendants.

As cultures evolve, mythologies also evolve throughout the course of hundreds of years. The mythical explanations of Indigenous and Afro Latino culture screams for a more accurate description, as to the genesis of an Afro-Indigenous people. I believe that the myth of colorblindness perpetrated in Latin American culture, is only a pretext for the psychological response to the historical denial of Spanish paternal abandonment.

The mythical mestizo or mulato born into a patriarchal Spanish culture, created the need for approval from a European Father at the expense of the afro-indigenous mother, who breast fed them and ensured their survival. The humble ancestral mother would allow the Spanish father to receive undue credit, to protect the child from the brutal reality of being fatherless and illegitimate. The mestizo or mulatto child would grow up with male icons in the form of a European God, European standards of beauty, European education and immortalize the father by "bettering the race," and marrying into white families.

A Mexican film made in the 1940's called "Angelitos Negros," where a light-skinned baby girl born from an interracial liaison, was raised as a white woman. It was one of the first Latin American films, brought to life this brutal reality. Her true mother, who was Black, had to pretend to be the child's personal servant as she grew into adulthood. "La Criada" or servant would not share the truth of their relationship, in order to allow her light-skinned daughter to enjoy the privileges of white womanhood. "La Criada's" self-sacrifice is a running theme in the lives of our ancestral mothers, who had to live lives of quiet desperation.

A culture will grow and develop through various stages of maturity, paralleling the development of a human being from infancy to its eventual death.

What can be the cultural explanation of Latin America's denial of historical truths that readily embrace a mythology, which perpetrates a reality rendering its historical victims invisible? However, under conditions of oppression, human resistance will surface in various forms.

This is evidenced in religious symbolism and icons expressed in the Latin American cult of the Virgin Mary. The religious significance of the Afro-Indigenous Virgin Mary is symbolic of her resistance against a social order, which almost destroyed afro-indigenous womanhood. In order to ensure the earlier survival of the mestizo or mulatto child during the conquest; the Virgin Mary was adopted as the cultural symbol of sacrifice who totally surrenders herself to a higher order of God/Men.

The transformation of the Virgin Mary as the archetype of the conquered woman of the Americas permitted our ancestral mother, to recreate her own myth about her material conditions in this world. The image of the Virgin mother, provided hope for our ancestral mother who yearned for liberation by a risen Christ-child who promised he would return for her in the second coming. Through her risen son, she will receive her rightful place in the glory of heaven. Our ancestral mothers envisioned her atonement in the after life. Our ancestral mother, will be absolved from her psychological and sexual rape and regain her purity, which was lost in the conquest.

There is an Afro-Latina consciousness, which is still a sleeping giant in our midst. She will mature and she will be one with her creator. She will discard the partial human form of Yurugu, which in West African culture is synonymous with being an incomplete being. Suffering will no longer be her destiny. She will assume control of her heavenly body, which will transcend the ashes of European civilization, and fly like the Phoenix to her freedom. Hence, a new social order where heaven and earth, will become the same and the story of our Queen Mother begins anew.

Christopher

Rodriguez is an activist, author and lecturer and has written a book entitled the Latino Manifesto: A Critique of the Race Debate in the U.S. Latino Community. For more information go to

www.Latinomanifesto.com.

© Copyright 2007 Blacktino e-News Network

POST YOUR COMMENTS TO DIALOGUE ON ARTICLES:

1. Register to Blacktino.net.
2. Login in with your username & password.
3. Scroll to the end of each article.
4. Post your comments.
5. NO Spam.