

BORN AGAIN RASTA?

by messian dread, FEBRUARY 2002

When I reason with either Rastafarians or Christians, I come to realize something again and again. In the vision of many people the two seem to exclude each other. But when I meditate over these things, I can see how definitions are being used, definitions of which you can not say that they cover the truth completely. They are merely an expression of a certain interpretation, driven by personal experiences, yet presented as a standard. These are the kind of things that I hear a lot of times:

"I used to be a born again Christian, but now I am a Rasta"

"I used to be a Rasta, but now I am a Born Again Christian".

What is it, that makes people want to say things like that? What is the reason for this mutual exclusion? Ironically, they are the same for the "Anti Christian Rasta" and the "Anti Rastafarian Christian", so to speak. It comes from a certain definition of Rastafari. What is this definition, or should I perhaps say "Identification", of Rastafari? It's this:

"Rastafari is a movement of people who worship Haile Selassie as God"

Now, if this definition was a true one and covering the believe of all Rastafarians, it would be very easy to see how Christianity and Rastafari would have to exclude each other. For Christians believe in the Tri-une God, Father Son and Spirit, mystically One and Three. We believe that Yesus Kristus is God Incarnated in the flesh, to come to die to save the lost. Like in every monotheistic faith, there is no other God. But is Selassie really being worshipped as God by all Rastafarians? And what about those who believe that Selassie is the return of Yesus Kristus?

Since Haile Selassie has left the visible spectrum, some say he died and others say he didn't, the movement of Rastafari is divided into two main streams. Two streams divided by a difference in meditation about the person(ality) of His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie I. And it's a difference which, in a growing degree, grows further and further away from that definition of Rasta I gave earlier. Where most Rastas used to believe in His Majesty as the return of Christ, or simply as God, Selassie's disappearance did cause many to re-define their ways. Simply put, there are now two, or three, mainstreams within Rastafari.

The first stream says, more or less, that Haile Selassie came to show us "the Christ consciousness". This is a term which comes from ancient Gnostic writings and is currently being used by the New age Movement to describe a spiritual state of mind. In this stream you can also hear a lot of "Fire Bun Geezus".

The second stream says, also more or less, that Haile Selassie is not Christ, but was a representant of Christ. In essence, this stream is Christian. Gadman, the head of the 12 Tribes of Israel, is one of the leading figures in this thing. But you can also see Yabby You, the I-riginal Jesus Dread in here as well, although Yabby doesn't call himself a Rasta.

The third stream (still) sees Selassie as God the Father, or Christ (God the Son) returned.

Although the first two streams are gradually becoming the two main streams within Rastafari, the third stream is (still) being seen as representative for the movement of Rastafari as a whole. I remember this conversation with a Christian who had written a piece on Rastafari, saying that the definition of Rastafari was the worship of Selassie as God. I pointed him out to the fact that the definition he had given wasn't quite covering the beliefs of all Rastafarians and could therefore not be used as he did. Although this Christian did acknowledge that I was right in my observation, and even quoted me from another publication in which he did acknowledge this, he refused to change his writings nevertheless. The reason for this that he said his meditation was mainly aimed at those Rastafarians who sight Selassie as God. I was shocked to see how truth and reality is apparently not a relevant issue for some, in their zeal to break down a movement they don't care what's happening in it. A serious thing.

Equally, I see many Rastafarians whose Rastafarianity expresses itself mainly as a coming from an anti-Christian point of view. When you enter with a Yesus Meditation they start to scorn at you. To "Fire Bun Jesus Christ" is a current trend within certain factions. Christianity is unconditionally being portrayed as a babylonian movement, Jesus Christ as the god of the enslavers. These Rastafarians in my view are totally ignoring the fact that His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I was a devout Christian, his works gave him the title "Defender of the Christian Orthodox Faith". And by ignoring HIM's Christianity, they are also denying the existence of a Christianity without babylon. And that is also a very serious thing.

It is obvious and clear for many, that manipulation seems to be part of the game for some of them. They are obviously not taking heed into the truth, and they hold on to a definition of Rastafari that might be good for maintaining the status quo but is definitely not in harmony with the current runnings within Rastafari. Does the truth need manipulation? I think that the use of caricatures are very dangerous when they are portrayed as the truth. They are negatively influencing the development of people. It was Christ, Who taught us to speak the Truth, it was Rastafari that rightfully pointed out again, that the truth have to be told. And now, when only half the story is told, yet presented as the "whole truth", one can say, that there is some manipulation going on. and manipulation to make people believe some thing is a serious thing.

Many have found their Identity within the movement of Rastafari. Some because they have seen the babylon system and how babylonian Christianity is being used by this same system to keep (black) people down. Some because they have seen King Selassie. An African King of Solomonic Descent proving that Jah thinks different about Africa then babylon system. And many also see, that Yesus Kristos is the Saviour and they want to be redeemed by the Blood of Christ, as Gadman of the 12 Tribes describes it. Are they then "Born Again Rasta"? Perhaps.

Does it really matter, I hear some people ask. I think, it matters a lot. I can see some immediate results from upholding a definition like the one I am describing in this Itation. One of these results I can see in the feedback that I'm getting on my Itations. Fortunately, a lot of people feel blessed after reading the Itations. I don't know how many times I've heard: "Finally, I thought I was the only one". But each time I do, I get very happy and realize again and again what a blessing it is to see Jah works! But it is a fact, that a wrong definition make many people feel confused, because inwardly they know something, and the establishment is denying this.

Another result is the sometimes very negative response, coming mainly from Christian brethren and sistren. They have been trained (or they are training others) to see Rastafari as another religion, apart from Christianity. The word "misleading" has been put on my Itations. But when you ask, what is the misleading aspect, it is, that I am not following their definition of Rastafari. A definition, which isn't quite up-to-date with the current runnings in the movement.

Only Jah knows how many people are currently finding themselves in a situation, in which the establishment is telling them, that they cannot believe what they do. Because it doesn't fit into the definitions. But although they say, that you can't be a Christian and also a Rasta, or vice versa, reality has proven otherwise. There is not a proper definition of Rastafari that would clearly show this.