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The “White” Jesus is not the Jesus of the Bible

S.E.M. Pheko

I am against a “White Jesus”. He is the imagination of Western artists who painted angels “white” and Satan “black”. The Jesus of the Bible is unique and far more than a mere man—be he black, white, brown or yellow. Jesus was a Palestinian, a pure Jew. The Jews of Jesus’ day were not black and brown. Unlike Karl Marx who was a German Jew, Jesus was not European.

Jesus was a man in the sense that He represented every race. His mission on earth was to all the tribes, races and nations of this world ([John 3:16](#)). In this context, therefore, it becomes irrelevant whether Jesus as God came into the world in flesh ([1 Timothy 3:16](#)) was black, white, yellow or pink. The Jesus seen in pictures is inadequate. He perverts our thoughts about God and imparts all sorts of wrong impressions to us about His character. The commandment of God in [Exodus 20:4](#) says, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the water under the earth”. The commandment forbids idolatry which consists not only in the worship of the image of false gods, but also in the worship of the true God. The application of this commandment today is that we should not make use of visual and spiritual representations of the Triune God. Pictures distort His full nature and character.

Some people see no harm in the use of pictures of Jesus Christ in Sunday School or having crucifixes of Christ in their rooms. They say that these pictures help them meditate on Christ when they pray or are tempted. In Africa, the use of pictures or images has not helped much in revealing the Jesus of the Bible Who is the Lord and Saviour. For Africa and the rest of the world, to appreciate Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, we should hear His voice in the Bible and see less of the images or pictures supposedly representing Him.
(abridged)

Mr. S.E.M. Pheko is an exiled South African netionist who works with Every Home Crusade in Zambia and with *Daystar* communications (Nairobi). p. 152

Book Reviews

FAITH AND CHURCH

Paul: Apostle of the Free Spirit

by F. F. Bruce

(Paternoster Press, Exeter, 1977, £9.60)

Abstract of reviews in *Themelios* January 1979 by David Campbell and in the *Evangelical Quarterly* October-December 1978 by Colin Hemer.