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CANADA'S PREMIER AFRICAN MAGAZINE

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African IMMIGRANT

CELEBRATING
BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH

GHOLLYWOOD:
WHO KILLED
GHANA FILM
INDUSTRY?

Understanding BLACK HISTORY

Not Just About The Past

US/CANADA BORDER: MORE SCRUTINY FOR PR CARD HOLDERS ON ENTRY/EXIT

PLUS + RAISING YOUR KIDS IN NORTH AMERICA, p.16



PUBLISHER'S NOTE 05

In the Spirit of The Winter Olympics

EDUCATION 06

Immigrant Students Excel in Universities

CANADIAN EXPERIENCE 07

Removal of Canadian Experience Barrier

Nkeiruka's Column 08

Valentine: Unconditional Love

Reflection 10

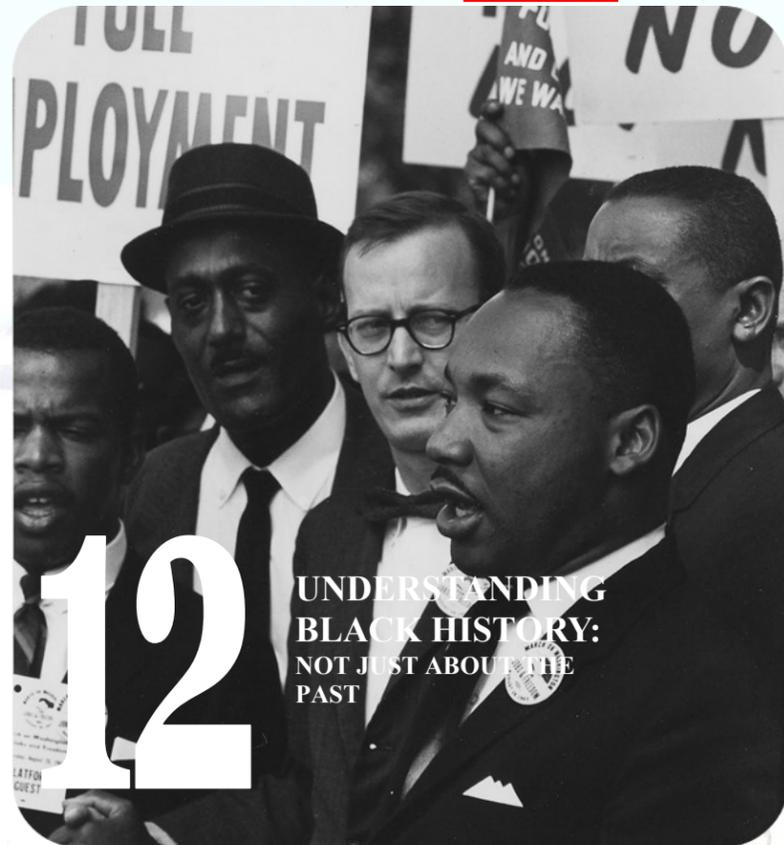
African Spirituality w/ Dr. Mantey



22

**GHOLLYWOOD:
WHO KILLED THE
GHANA FILM
INDUSTRY?**

CONTENTS



12 **UNDERSTANDING
BLACK HISTORY:
NOT JUST ABOUT THE
PAST**

IMMIGRATION LAW 11

Border Crossing: Entry/Exit Made Difficult

COVER STORY 12-13

Understanding Black History

FEATURE 16

Raising Your Children in North America

OPINION 15

That Pesky Thing Called Assimilation

CAREER 20

Muslims & Employment Discrimination

ENTERTAINMENT 22-23

GHOLLYWOOD: Who Killed Ghana Film Industry?

Filmmakers who heard the news at that time were ecstatic that the dream of Nkrumah to create a vibrant film industry could finally be realized. The facilities of the Ghana Film Industry Corporation were once again available to filmmakers and the staff of the company gloried in a new beginning for GFIC. They were wrong! Certainly the priority of the Mills led government in 2011 was not filmmaking in Ghana. When the Coleman-led administration of GAMA, after government took control, decided to charge TV3's new owners rent of \$26,000.00 for the use of their premises so they could raise seed capital to revive the fortunes of the ailing corporation, a Deputy Minister of Information at that time, asked him to proceed on leave.

All staff of GAMA also went home. Ironically, the very filmmakers charged to make and preserve our heritage were shoved out of GAMA. It is not surprising then that GAMA was again placed on divestiture and within three months was snapped up by the new owners of TV3 giving them full control of all the facilities. This brought to an end over 60 years of the Ghana Film Industry Corporation.

A New Generation of Filmmakers

In the meantime, private filmmakers were struggling to keep the industry going. Students of the National Film Institute, the only one of its kind in West Africa, who could have made use of the GAMA facility, were graduating in droves to find an industry all but dead and buried. The hundreds of editors, producers, directors, scriptwriters and cameramen became disillusioned with the apparent lack of support for the industry. Many faded away and some gave up on their dream and ended up doing other things. I dare say that one of the challenges brought about by the lack of support for the Ghana Film Industry

corporation was the emergence of certain filmmakers who by virtue of seeing a huge gap in the industry, started new dimensions to filmmaking. The emergence of the so-called 'Glamour Movie' genre and Kumawood were born. Of course, the gap had to be filled and filled it was with sub-standard scripts and poor quality acting and no one to correct the mistakes being made by these producers, actors and filmmakers.

Yet there was a silver lining. A number of people shone through. They stepped up their game and gave us a peek into the future of filmmaking. A rebirth took place and Ghanaians now had an opportunity to see some well-produced movies once again. Shirley Frimpong Manso and Leila Djansi became icons of the industry. They both took us to new levels of digital film production.

Shirley brought us 'Life and Living it', 'Perfect Picture', 'Scorned', 'Checkmate', 'Adams Apple', among others. Leila Djansi came with 'I Sing of a Well', 'Sinking Sands' and 'Ties that Bind'. At the same time Ghana's most celebrated filmmaker Kwaw Ansah continued to make movies with 'The Love of AA' and 'Papa Lasisi's Bicycle'. I wonder sometimes where the great actors of our time are. Many have simply gone into hibernation and only come out when something worth doing comes out. The likes of Ebenezer Brew-Riverson, Dzifa Glikpoe, Akosua Abdallah, Mawuli Semavor, Oscar Provincial and Doris Sackitey were the role models for many of us in acting school. We marvelled at Kofi Middleton Mends, Martin Owusu, Mary Yirenkyi, Kofi Yirenkyi, Kofi Bucknor and Anima Misa as they honed their craft.

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-ENTERTAINMENT- WHO KILLED THE GHANA FILM INDUSTRY?

The Challenges of GHOLLYWOOD & The
Way Forward

By JOT AGYEMAN

The state of the Ghana Film Industry is dire. I have sat back and watched keenly the semblance of a revival taking place in the industry and doff my hat to filmmakers such as Kwaw Ansah, Shirley Frimpong Manso and Leila Djansi for keeping the film industry alive. Other filmmakers including Socrates Safo and Abdul Salam Mumuni have also made a name for themselves. I dare say, however, that the Ghana Film Industry is on the brink of death.

In 1948, the Gold Coast Film Unit was set up within the Information Services Department (ISD). Shortly after independence, Dr Kwame Nkrumah created the State Film Company which later became the Ghana Film Industry Corporation (GFIC). Nkrumah built the very first complete film facility which then included the Information Services Department Film Unit building opposite the French Embassy and the whole of the land currently housing Afrikiko restaurant at Kanda as well as the premises of TV3. In the early days of filmmaking, stalwarts such as Rev. Chris Hesse, Tom Riberio, R.A. Fenuku, Frank Parks, Sam Aryitsey and Ashong Katai gave their all to nurture an industry that was new and vibrant. From the early 1960's all the way to the mid-1970's, the Ghana Film Industry welcomed filmmakers from Nigeria, Togo, Senegal and Kenya. These students of film came to Ghana to learn from the very best in Africa. How quickly did the tables turn!

The Demise of Ghana Film Industry

There is no doubt that the military coup of 1981 led to the demise of the Ghana Film Industry. This I will explain later. Dr Kwame Nkrumah set up the Ghana Film Industry and built the largest studio in West Africa in what is today known as Studio B at TV3. The premises that today holds TV3 and all the facilities including the Executive Theatre were part of Nkrumah's plan to create an African film industry to rival what he had seen in America during his school days and what the colonial government, championed by the BBC, were doing; though, he may have had a plan to use the industry to propagate his message. There is no denying that he built a well-equipped, world class facility for film production.

Good News for Film Makers

According to the terms of reference, the Malaysians had 10 years to operate the business. In 2010, the agreement with Media Prima of Malaysia ended so TV3 was quietly put up for sale and the government of Ghana already a shareholder in GAMA, regained its shares in GAMA to once again become 100 per cent shareholder.



NADIA BUARI



MARTHA ANKOMAH

RIP: Ghanaians in Toronto Mourn Veteran BBC Journalist, Komla Dumor — By Prof. Phil Tam-Al Alalibo

The death of renowned Ghanaian journalist of 'BBC African Business Review' fame, Komla Dumor, has thrown the Ghanaian community in Toronto and by extension African communities across the GTA into mourning. One couldn't have seen this coming, that the once vibrant and amicable Harvard educated journalist would be taken away in his very prime at the young age of 41.



As Ghanaian president John Dramani noted following his death, Dumor was a great ambassador for his country and an even greater ambassador for Africa. Within a short period of anchoring BBC's African Review program, his name had become a household name as millions tuned in every Friday evening to watch his tantalizing, educative and quite informative analysis of African economies and business climate.

Komla's deep understanding of the continent and factors that underline its political, social and economic development endeared him to many and won him fans across the continent. Perhaps, the most enduring legacy of this one-time Joy FM broadcaster is his humility and down-to-earth disposition in spite of his envied position, status and fame. Throughout his many travels across the continent, Komla always sought to be with the common citizens of the land, eating, playing and even helping with chores. He will be dearly missed. RIP Komla!

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RE: Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Rules— A Relief to Tax Payers

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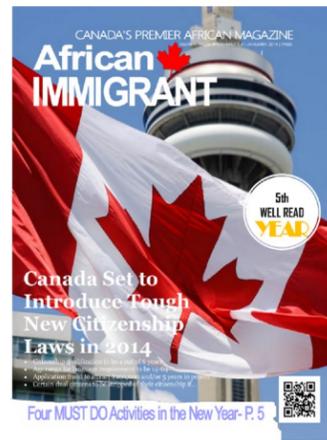
Thank you for bringing to the fore the tightening of citizenship rules that are aimed at strengthening the value of Canadian citizenship in your last month's (January) issue. Though the new laws are yet to scale through Parliament, I am confident that they will as there is a sense in the country that citizenship rules are grossly abused and taken for granted

by many immigrants. Most of us have come to expect such rules to be put in place to check the excesses on the system. When these laws are passed and come into effect, they will present relief to hard working Canadians whose taxes support the 'citizens of convenience'. Due to the lax citizenship rules, those immigrants spend three years, raise their hand to swear allegiance to

Her Majesty, the Queen, and then disappear to their lives in their native countries only to show up periodically to undergo expensive medical check-ups and treatments at the expense of the taxpayer. Most of them claim benefits not deserved, including child tax benefits designed for children who live in the country, yet, their children attend expensive schools in their native countries. Some are even on

public assistance, draining resources they have not contributed to. Requiring a four year wait period and two years of taxation will go along way to check fraud.

- Cynthia Letting (Kenyan)
Guelph, ON



TO SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR — EMAIL: PUBLISHER@AFRICANIMMIGRANT.CA

ON THE FLY

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Celebrating Black History Month: Black History is Everyone's History

By Yaa-Hemaa Obiri-Yeboah

Black History Month is not just for black people. In an ideal world, there would be no need for a dedicated month to mark black history — and the significant contributions that blacks have made around the world — because it would be on par and as well-known as History, i.e. the mainstream history that many of us learned in high school. I don't know how history was taught when you were in school, but in my school our teachers skipped over the chapter (yes, only a single chapter) on blacks in Canada and North America more generally. Sure, I understand that there's much to cram into school curricula, but when we skip over or elude significant aspects of our country's past, we demonstrate what -or who - is important or unimportant in our society. These omissions—which affect, of course, not only blacks, but also Asians, native peoples, and various other ethnic

groups (women too lest we forget) skew our view of the world and lead to erroneous assumptions. If a child, or an adult for that matter, only learns about the contributions of those of European descent, it's unlikely that they will consider that people of other races or ethnicities also played a significant role in building our country. How can you be expected to know and understand the full spectrum of history if you've never been given non-traditional examples? To put it another way, if you never saw the colour blue in your lifetime would you know that it even existed? I don't see Black History Month as revisionist in any way; the aim isn't to rewrite history to artificially raise the ranking of black contributions; the aim is to bring to light or to the surface the people and events that were forgotten or that were purposefully buried in the annals of time. Also, Black History Month isn't designed

to elevate black culture over white culture. One isn't better than the other. In fact, neither history or culture is separate or distinct because it's a shared history. The concurrent stories on both sides of the coin are what make our shared past. Black History month isn't just my month, or your month, or the month of a friend of yours. It's ours.



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| JOBS |

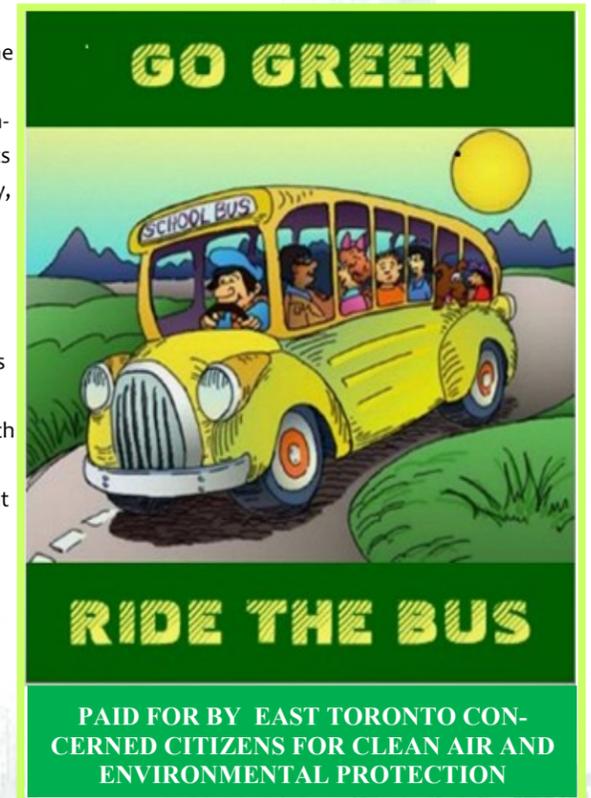
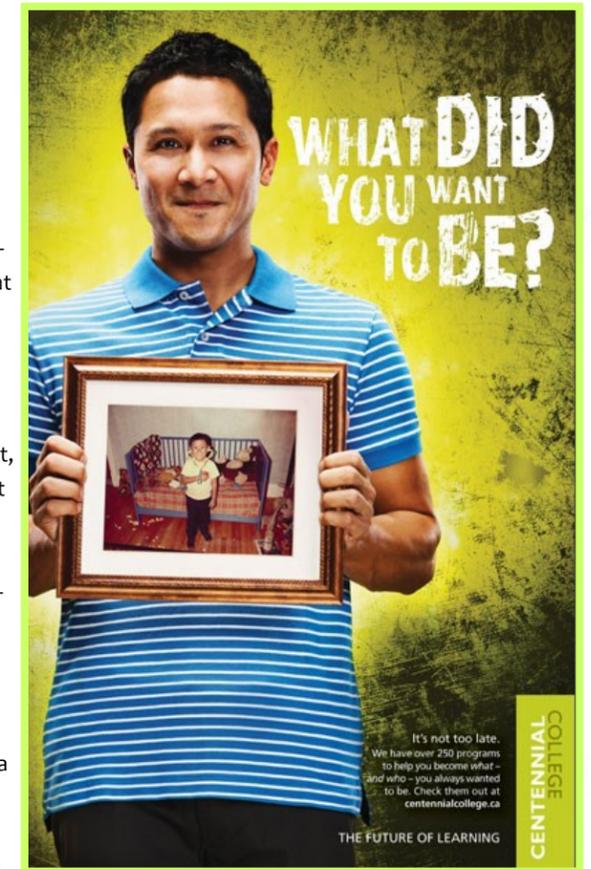
JOBS: Immigrants Lag Behind Canadian-born in Securing A Job

Immigrants are less likely to have a job than their Canadian-born counterparts, according to Statistics Canada. The data agency says the employment rate for what it calls core-aged immigrants (those between the ages of 25 and 54) was 75.6 per cent last year. That lags behind the employment rate of 82.9 per cent for people born in Canada. Employment among landed immigrants in the agency's core working-age group increased 4.3 per cent from the previous year. But despite the uptick in the level of employment, the employment rate for immigrants is still 1.8 percentage points lower than it was in 2008, before the economic slowdown started. "This was mostly because their growth in employment did not keep pace with the growth in their population," the data agency says. The 1.8 percentage point slowdown is larger than the 1.2 percentage point decline seen in the Canadian-born workforce over that timeframe. Employment prospects for immigrants also appear to improve over time.

Only 63.5 per cent of core-aged immigrants who had been in Canada for five years or less last year had jobs. But for those who have been in Canada for more than a decade, the rate jumped to 79.8 per cent. Indeed, there were also wide differences across the different regions of the country. Immigrants living on the Prairies and in British Columbia accounted for more than half the growth in employment among landed immigrants. And in Alberta, the gap in employment rates between immigrants and the Canadian born was among the lowest in the country. In fact, established immigrants in the province had an employment rate of 85.6 per cent last year, higher than that of their Canadian-born counterparts, who had an 84.4 per cent employment rate. That contrasts with Quebec, which has the lowest core-aged employment rate in the country, at 70.3 per cent.

Different Ethnicities

The numbers also show wide variances along gender lines. Last year, the employment rate for core-aged male immigrants was 83 per cent. That compares with 85.5 per cent for Canadian-born men. The employment gap between immigrant women and their Canadian-born counterparts was much wider — with an employment rate of 68.8 per cent for the former and 80.3 for the latter. Women who were very recent immigrants had a much lower employment rate of 52.5 per cent, Statistics Canada said. And the employment rate among different ethnic groups is also all over the map. Since 2006, when Statistics Canada started tracking the immigrant labour force, people from the Philippines have had the highest employment rate among all ethnic groups, at 85.6 per cent. The Filipino employment rate even outpaces that of people born in Canada, the agency says. After the Philippines and Canada, immigrants from Europe have the third-highest employment rate. With a 73.1 per cent employment rate, Asian-born immigrants lag most ethnic groups, as do African immigrants, who have an employment rate of 70.1 per cent. (CBC News)





Understanding BLACK HISTORY

Not Just About the Past

By Alexandra Kazia



Pastor Wendell Gibbs speaks to a full house at Toronto's First Baptist Church during its annual Black History Month celebration. The congregation sings songs like *We shall overcome* and *My chains are gone* while the children take turns later asking the elders about their experiences as Black Canadians over the years. It's what you would expect of a Sunday service at the end of February for a predominantly Black congregation. But the church itself has a special place historically in Toronto — as the site of one of the first places of worship for those early slaves who had made their way north to freedom in the early 1800s.

But as Canada wraps up Black History Month at the end of this week, historians, community leaders and others are expressing mixed thoughts on the effectiveness of the now almost 20-year-old celebration. Though each agrees that the focus on the past should ultimately be a way of looking for a better future. We are celebrating our heritage, we are excited for what our forefathers have done for us in the previous generation — the struggle for freedom and the Underground Railroad that Washington Christian, our founder, came through. But the plight for his goal for a ministry wasn't about our Blackness," said Gibbs. "It was about our faith and our faith has evolved some almost 200 years later... I now consider us [not a Black church], but a diverse church." Canada was a haven to those seeking refuge and

the Underground Railroad brought between 30,000 and 40,000 Black slaves north to freedom in Canada, with most of them settling in southern Ontario and Atlantic Canada, specifically Nova Scotia. Twelve men and women, who had escaped through the Railroad started the congregation here in 1826 — eight years before the British Empire saw the abolition of slavery, and 37 years before Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

After local white churches created impossible standards for these former slaves to meet in order to attend worship in Toronto, the group started their own community of faith. Washington Christian, a former slave from Virginia, led the group of worshippers in services outdoors, in homes and rented properties until they were able to fund their own building in 1841, according to the church's website.

Although that building no longer stands as their home (their present-day location in Chinatown was completed in 1955), the congregation has been going strong for more than 187 years in the heart of the city. In a service honouring the group's collective past, Pastor Gibbs wants everyone in the pews — of all stripes and backgrounds — to start focusing on the future. "The church evolved out of a very traditional context. We're very historical," Gibbs said. "But the notion of history and tradition, I think, stifles the context for modernizing the church to become relevant to the current generation and the current church... *continued on page 14*

COVER STORY CONTINUED from p. 13

and society we are living in. Kevin Dill, a deacon at the church, hopes that First Baptist can continue to look out towards the greater community, and not focus solely on its "blackness." He acknowledges that the historical past is intrinsic to understanding where the congregation is now, but he wants to focus on building bridges across communities, through the outreach work that is the crux of their ministry. "We are a church whose members just happen to be mostly black," Dill said. "We recognize our history, we're very proud of what Elder Washington did, but we have to get ready for the next generation."

ON-GOING PREJUDICE:

But looking ahead doesn't mean the old stories should be left behind or that all problems have been overcome. In 2009, for example, the church was vandalized by someone or some group who wrote "God loves white people" on its door. Although everyone at the congregation maintained a "move on" attitude, it's events like that that demonstrated the value — and possible shortcomings — of Black History Month. Deacon Lorene Slaughter has been attending First Baptist for more than 40 years.

She, along with many others in the congregation, hails from Dartmouth, N.S., where there were many, once rather insular, black communities originating from the mid-1800s. "I just get fearful that it becomes a nice word and it has no meaning," Slaughter says of the concept of Black History Month. "It's lost its effectiveness, and I think we need to get back to the beginning," she adds, recounting her own struggles in dealing with prejudice over the years. That's something that Adrienne Shadd, a freelance writer and researcher of black history agrees with. Shad worries that

while the shining moments of black history, like the success of the Underground Railroad, are often taught and talked about in February, the full and very complicated past isn't always explored. In the rush to paint Canada as a wonderful haven — in contrast to what was happening in America at the time — historians often fail to acknowledge the struggles black Canadians endured after arriving here. "My issues with Black History Month in Canada is that it's always the Underground Railroad and Canada is this great country because we accepted all these people. But they don't want to talk about slavery in Canada and everything that happened before or everything that happened after," Shadd said.

"I would like people to look at how black Canadians have influenced the country. That might not be easy right away, but we obviously have influenced it," she says. "We built the roads and the railways and constructed the houses." Shad argues that there is much more history to examine pertaining to black Canadians, and that viewing it only through the prism of "black history" is part of the problem as it really should be seen as part of the larger Canadian context.

Pastor Gibbs agrees. What's more, he says, the lessons of black history, like the overcoming of obstacles, can contribute to a richer discussion and inspire other groups. "So we can share in our own struggle as an example of how we have overcome," he says. "But it's not just us. It's the First Nations. And it's not just the First Nations, but it's the immigrants who are coming in from Europe, it's the new immigrants coming from Africa. It's everyone."

| IMMIGRATION LAW |

Canada/U.S. Make it Tougher for PR/Green Card Holders to Cross Border

WHAT IS ENTRY/EXIT?

Under the Beyond the Border Action Plan, Canada and the United States (U.S.) committed to establishing a coordinated entry and exit system at the common land border so that the record of a traveler's entry into one country can be used to establish the traveler's exit from the other. A fully phased-in Entry/Exit system will help strengthen the integrity of Canada's border and immigration programs by closing the loop on an individual's travel history and will enable the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), for the first time, to have information on who has left the country in addition to the currently available information on those entering.

The Entry/Exit Initiative will also enhance national security and support law enforcement. This kind of information sharing will allow both countries to have information to assist each other in locating people involved in organized crime, terrorism and other crimes.

ABOUT PHASE II

Phase II builds on the success of Phase I, that confirmed the ability of Canada and the U.S. to exchange biographic entry data as a means to establish an exit from the other country. As part of Phase II, both countries will exchange biographic entry data collected on third-country nationals (those who are neither citizens of Canada nor of the U.S.), permanent residents of Canada who are not U.S. citizens, and lawful permanent residents of the U.S. who are not Canadian citizens, at all **automated land border ports of entry** (land, ferry and pedestrian), including all major land border crossings.

In Phase I, this exchange of information was limited to four land ports of entry located in British Columbia/Washington State and in Ontario/New York.

This an important next step as Phase II will allow the CBSA to:

- identify persons subject to a removal or departure order who may have departed the country, which will facilitate immigration enforcement actions and investigations;
- enhance the travel history to assist in determining whether individuals continue to meet permanent residency obligations and/or meet eligibility requirements to apply for citizenship.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE FOR PHASE II

The data exchanged under Phase II on third-country nationals, permanent residents of Canada who are not U.S. citizens, and lawful permanent residents of the U.S. who are not Canadian citizens, will include biographic traveler information that is already collected, as well as the date/time of entry and the port through which the individual has entered. There will be no information shared on Canadian or U.S. citizens for Phase II. The biographic entry data elements being shared for Phase II are: **first name, last name, middle name, date of birth, nationality, gender, document type, document number, and document country of issuance.**



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Life is Beautiful

VALENTINE

Unconditional LOVE

I love the red that colors everywhere in February, I love to enter the stores and see the beautiful red cards and balloons with the sweetest words ever, wonderful declarations of love, a host of beautifully crafted cards stating how wonderful you are as a husband, wife, girlfriend, boyfriend, mom, dad etc. I wish this ostentatious display of love by individuals could be this way all year round, but why not?

Personally, I think we should not wait until February to remind our loved ones how special and important they are in our lives. Everyday should be another opportunity to let the other person know how you feel. Why wait till tomorrow, life goes by so fast, say what you want to say today and do not wait until tomorrow, you may not get that chance another time. Everybody needs love, it is a wonderful feeling to be told you are special.

Tell me one person who does not like to be affirmed in this way.

Love is such a fundamental human need, we thrive on it, it makes us flourish and blossom. It brings out something beautiful in us that we may not even know we possess. It is easy to love your significant other when things are going well. Bills are paid on time most of your needs are met but what happens when things are not going so smoothly?

You come to a new country the stress of settling down, finding work, learning new ways of doing things even something as simple as getting a driver's license can become quite a huge task. Getting the driver's license is very humbling, it does not matter you have been driving for more than 20 years in Africa before coming to Toronto, you still have to learn the Canadian way of driving. How about when roles are switched inevitably because of the change in circumstances, maybe when

you were back home he was the main 'bread winner' but somehow here you find a better job than he has and the roles are reversed, will that love still keep sizzling like it did in the past? It needs to, he is still the same person your 'prince charming'. As a matter of fact he needs the love and respect now more than ever before to maintain his dignity and sanity, after all what is the nature of love?

A simple kind word
A show of understanding, support and encouragement
I believe in you
A listening ear
Love could mean different things to different people but a common factor will be wanting to make the other person happy, putting his or her needs above yours. Loving unconditionally, no matter the circumstances. Where there is love even if there is not much material stuff there is joy and fullness of life.

What is the use of a valentine card if your words the following day are harsh and unkind? Think about how you can make it special for your loved ones for the rest of the year after February.

Love should be a habit not an occasion. We say in Nigeria 'everyday is not Christmas but when it comes to loving each other it should be everyday. In good times and in difficult times. The transition into a new life even in a country as beautiful as Canada can be challenging, but love and support of each other will nourish your soul and energize you to keep going and striving towards your goal. Love is a great tonic. For me, I want my loved ones to know everyday how much they mean to me and how much I appreciate them. I always tell them. I want to continue to invest in my relationships, as friendship and love is far more valuable than the physical and material things in life. The card my sweetheart sent me captures it. "If I could pull down the rainbow I would write UR name with it & put it back in the sky 2 let everybody know how colorful my life is with a friend like U!!"

Nkeiruka Osagie
(nkeirukaosagie@gmail.com)



That Pesky Thing Called Assimilation

By Fikile N. Mazambani

The society I had chosen to live in had a playbook for me. I was learning the hard way. I thought layering for winter meant wearing as many warm jackets and coats as I could possibly muster. My workmate had to sit me down one day after I was panting and had nowhere to hang my clothes. As the years went by, I fully grasped the concepts, language, culture and nuances."

When most of us came over to Canada from Zimbabwe, we thought that we would not have many problems integrating into Canadian society because, well, we had the language down pat. Language is everything right? Well, not really.

I had not even thought of the whole North American culture besides what I had consumed via TV. There was nothing I had not watched, from the Care Bears right down to the Young and the Restless. Let's not forget the whole hip hop culture! The East Coast vs the West Coast beef, but I digress... My first rude awakening was finding out that all of a sudden I could not cross the road! I was on the wrong side of the road and my brain went on to struggle with that concept for the next 6 or so years - no lie. I was used to driving on the left side of the road. The glitch in my brain would not recognize that

I would get run down if I tried that. I may or may not still be trying to cross on the wrong side of the road. Then there was the issue of language. One day, I found myself at odds with a taxi driver.

I needed him to drop me off just before the robots. He was mystified and I was running out of patience. What did he not understand about my request? We both found out I meant traffic lights! Suddenly, Father Christmas was now Santa. Biscuits resembled breakfast scones and cookies were what I knew as biscuits! Are you confused yet? What was happening? It was happening to me, I was in the process of assimilating! I had never heard of the concept until I took a counselling module in college. Yes, do not judge me!

The society I had chosen to live in had a playbook for me. I was learning the hard way. I thought layering for winter meant wearing as many warm jackets and coats as I could possibly muster. My workmate had to sit me down one day after I was panting and had nowhere to hang my clothes. As the years went by, I fully grasped the concepts, language, culture and nuances. When I decided to visit home, I found out I needed to assimilate back into that society. I had to 'stop showing off'. I was having a conversation with my niece's daughter about her diaper and pacifier. She

listened intently but had no idea what I had just said. If I had remembered my own language, I would have known that a diaper was a nappy and a pacifier, a dummy - both offensive words in North America. Then there was the issue of impatience because 'there is no hurry in Africa'. I will admit, I was at the forefront, scoffing at people returning home with these 'new habits'. I always wondered why they just could not speak or act 'normally'. Full stop! Oh, I mean period! What have been some of your experiences? Email us at publisher@africanimmigrant.ca

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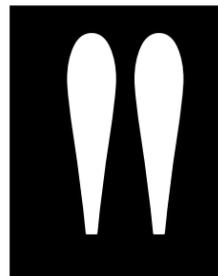


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Youth Mentorship The Road to Success

BY PROF. PHIL TAM-AL ALALIBO



In the last few years, there have been many reported acts of violence sometimes leading to death among the youth in the various African communities."

Each one teach one—With the so many distractions and peer pressure on today's youth, it has become imperative for adults in the various communities across Canada to step up and guide the youth to success. The power of mentorship cannot be under estimated and many of the youth are simply looking for a role model, someone who can impart some knowledge, direction and wisdom.

One of the major societal challenges regarding our youth is the fact that so many of them are being raised by single parents, mostly single mothers which invariably means that they need a strong father influence in their lives. This could not be truer for young boys who in spite of their macho disposition are very vulner-

able without some measure of male influence in the home. Some become rebellious towards the female authority in their home and ultimately are swayed by the wind of deviance and assorted vices.

When adults step up and take on these youth as mentee, they feel a sense of importance, purpose, rest assured that someone is interested in their wellbeing and in their professional and personal success. In the last few years, there have been many reported acts of violence sometimes leading to death among the youth in the various African communities. Regrettably, many of these youths have lost faith in the society and have nothing to live for. But hope is not lost, mentorship can be a medium, the much needed tonic to turn the tide.

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IMMIGRANT STUDENTS EXCEL IN UNIVERSITIES

Canadian-born students abandoning higher education and that has profound policy implications for government, studies suggest

By Douglas Todd (Vancouver Sun)



Most people who have attended Grade 12 graduation ceremonies or spent time on university campuses in Vancouver or Toronto have seen the signs. But some may still be surprised by a study by Statistics Canada, Garnett Picot and Feng Hou that verifies that young Canadians with immigrant backgrounds are almost twice as likely to go to university as students whose parents were born in Canada. The study's hard numbers confirm impressions obtained on Canada's major urban university campuses, where visible minorities tend to prevail on honour rolls and in business, science and engineering programs. "Students with immigrant backgrounds in Canada display a significant advantage regarding university

attendance," write Picot, of Queen's University, and Hou, of the University of Victoria. The social policy experts found 50 per cent of students who immigrated to Canada go to university, compared to 31 per cent of students who had one parent who is an immigrant and only 25 per cent of students whose parents were both born in Canada. The university success story is strongest among ethnic Chinese. "Students with Chinese origins are 40 percentage points more likely to attend university than those with Canadian-born parents," write Picot and Heng Hou. "That means that almost three-quarters of students with Chinese origins attend university, more than twice the rate among students with Canadian-born parents."

What are the policy implications of this?

The Picot and Hou study, which is supported by emerging research across Canada and the U.S., highlights an awkward reality for governments and school officials. Public officials are still formally required to channel energy into affirmative action programs for visible minorities, English-as-a-second language students and immigrants. But these studies show it is the students of those with Canadian parents who are falling behind. Some scholars are calling for a shift in education priorities in light of studies done by Picot, Hou and Grace Kao in the U.S., where data also show that children of immigrants have, on average, higher wages and educational levels than children of the American-born population.

One of the many revealing reality checks to come out of the Picot and Hou study is its confirmation that most students in North America who learn English as a second language are not at a disadvantage because of it. While many immigrant background children do relatively poorly on standardized literacy tests at age 15, the vast majority have dramatically overcome the language challenge by Grade 12. This is especially the case, say studies, for Chinese students and Asian females. "Poor performing secondary school students (at age 15) ... with Chinese backgrounds were seven times more likely to attend university than their poor-performing counterparts with a Canadian background. Low-performing students with other Asian backgrounds were four times more likely."

Continued from page 16

It is not uncommon to find children who rise from the dining table taking only their own plates and expecting their parents to take theirs too. Some even leave their plates for their parents to clear and wash. These are the same type of children that have unlimited access to the refrigerator and kitchen cabinets. Many of them eat whenever, wherever and whatever they want. They eat all day every day. This lack of self-control and absence of parental control become so ingrained in the psyche of these children that they never develop any moderating tendencies. Such children do not (and cannot) do their own laundries even when all it entails is merely putting the clothes in the washing machine and transferring them to the dryer.

We have Nigerian parents who hire (on a weekly basis) cleaning maids that sweep and vacuum the house; wash and fold clothes, including those of their teenage children and wipe down the furniture. These maids even come during holidays when the children do not have to go to school! I understand that if you have the financial wherewithal, your children should not "suffer" like you did growing up. But such children end up not being able to do their own chores when they eventually move out of their parents' homes.

Or do they ever really move out? Even if they move out physically, they are unable to accomplish simple tasks in their own homes. They rely on their parents to help run their homes, including their marriage. By their actions, you can tell what young man or woman did not get or did not imbibe the proper Nigerian home training. That man whose house is always in tatters – clothes all over the place, trash over-filled, entire home like a pigsty, lawn overgrown with weed as if you are in the bush; and that woman who cannot make *eba* or boil an egg without burning something – whose white bathtub is perpetually brown with soot and her commode as filthy as a dumpster, whose bedroom is always like a tornado went through it – that man or woman is an example of that child whose parents handled with kid gloves their entire formative years.

Our children now receive "time-outs"

Instead of the good-old tough love spanking that kept us on the straight and narrow path when we were young. As a five-year-old growing up in Zaria, my mother once found me in a family friend's home watching television. I had sneaked over there in contravention of her many prior warnings. My mother crept behind me as I sat on the floor with other kids; she lifted me by my ears (!) and carried me as far as she could. When she was tired, she would put me down and then lift me up again by my ears. We must have stopped about 20 times in a distance of about half a mile. My ears burned forever. These days, whenever I catch myself watching TV for too long, I feel my ears burning.

Out of the fear of being labeled a child abuser, many of us do not want to put our hands on our children at all. Clearly, Nigerian parents in the US should do their own verification of what the statutes say in their respective states. But after perusing child abuse statutes of all the 50 US states, I can say confidently that only Delaware prohibits any form of corporal punishment, to include spanking. Corporal punishment laws in Connecticut, New Jersey, Idaho, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Rhode Island and South Dakota are a bit ambiguous to me as a non-lawyer. But the rest of the states, including Hawaii and Alaska, permit "reasonable" corporal punishment when necessary for the promotion of the child's welfare.

In fact, Colorado defers to the child's culture! According to the state's Civil Code 19-1-303 (1), "any investigation of child abuse shall take into account the child-rearing practices of the child's culture." Majority of the states empower a variety of the combination of parents, stepparents, guardians, teachers and people holding the locus parentis status to administer corporal punishment. Of course, all the states that allow corporal punishment stipulate the caveat prohibiting physical harm to the child in the process of punishment. This caveat has to be highlighted in bold particularly because of the propensity for some us to visit our

visit on our children violence of bestial proportions. While it is true that many children go through life and become productive citizens without having experienced corporal punishment ever, many other children do require "whipping" back-to-shape when they stray. It is up to the parents to identify which of their children needs to be spanked. If you allow your child to become rude, lazy, recalcitrant, greedy, indifferent and disrespectful, chances are the child will amount to very little in life and you may end up forever bailing that child out of jail and out of other types of jams.

And this may come to the Nigerian reader as a big surprise: Not a whole lot of American parents spoil their children rotten like some of us do. It is a myth that many Nigerians have ignorantly perpetuated and have allowed their children to use against them. You will be amazed how many American parents – White, Black, Indian or Hispanic; Christian, Muslim, Jewish or Pagan – who have tight grips on their households and on their children's behavior. You will be surprised how respectful, courteous, dutiful, helpful, caring, loving, obedient and brilliant their children are. Ask your American friends how they run their homes. Better still; ask your children's American friends how they behave at home? And then ask yourself why you have allowed your own children to become the adult in your home.

The bottom line is this: what obtains in Nigeria obtains in the US, albeit with slight modifications. You do not need monkey-like summersaults before raising your child in God's ways. You cannot allow your children to be so spoilt to the point that they become incorrigible and constitute permanent liability to you. Parents hold their children in custody for God, who really owns them. As such, it is tantamount to gross dereliction of duty if parents cannot, on behalf of God, discipline the child in ways that set the child up for success in life and make him/her useful to God and humanity.

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Highly Qualified Muslim Immigrants Face Employment Discrimination

Last week, Quebec business interests sounded an alarm about the negative economic ramifications on the province of the proposed values charter. First the Conseil du patronat and then the head of a cable and media company warned that Bill 60 would discourage immigrants needed for economic growth. This issue arose the first day of the charter hearings last month, when the leader of a Muslim organization talked about a crisis among families of highly qualified North Africans who are being shut out of jobs in their fields.

Samira Laouni, of Communication pour l'ouverture et le rapprochement interculturel, estimated that current unemployment in the North African community is around 30 per cent — even though overall unemployment in Montreal is roughly 8 per cent. Laouni contends that employment discrimination against Muslims started after 9/11 and deteriorated after the Herouville incident in 2007, when the town council there passed a code of conduct for minorities targeting Muslims. She commented that since the proposal of the Quebec values charter, the employment situation for Muslims has wor-

sened. Laouni, a graduate of the Sorbonne in Paris, does not support “unreasonable accommodation” demands, and she would accept prohibition of religious head coverings for judges, crown prosecutors and prison guards. However, she is against the ban on head scarves for public service employees. “A head scarf is part of my identity,” she told the hearings.

In the wake of the proposed charter, more and more alarming stories are surfacing about employment discrimination against Muslims, mostly from North Africa but also from Iran. An Arabic teacher from Tunisia is making a living teaching Arabic and working for a grocery store even though he has a master’s in business administration.

“There is a crisis in the North African community because of the high unemployment,” he said. “Friends of mine from Algeria are so discouraged they are going home. Quebec has encouraged North Africans who speak French and have high education to come here, and then we find out we’re being rejected by employers. Many are warning others not to come here.”

Provincial-immigration figures for 2012 indicate that the single biggest block of immigrants, accounting for more than 15 per cent, came from the North African countries of Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt.

In a Montreal North nursing home where most of the staff are North African, a Moroccan man cleaning floors said he had extensive experience managing dépanneurs in Morocco. “I thought I would be able to find work in one of the dépanneur chains here. But no luck.” The stories go on. A trilingual Iranian woman — in a hijab — who earned a master’s degree in industrial engineering from Université Laval and also has two patents to her name hasn’t been able to find work in her field. She is now teaching mathematics privately.

And then there is the situation of university-educated taxi drivers. The Atlas Taxi company was started by unemployed Iranians, some of them engineers, business-administration graduates and doctors locked out of employment in their fields. Research by Vahideddin Namazi for a Université de Montréal PhD thesis showed that even after 15 years in Quebec, many university-educated Iranians were still driving taxis. (Courtesy of the Gazette).



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PUBLISHER'S INSIGHT

PROF. PHIL TAM-AL ALALIBO

IN THE SPIRIT OF THE WINTER OLYMPICS



“The Spirit of These Athletes is Endearing and Should be Emulated by All.”

The Sochi Winter Olympics have come and gone with winners and losers determined, but the memories of the games will be edged in the hearts and minds of the athletes and all those that have been affected by the unique event. The athletes that excelled in these games have gone home with the satisfaction that their efforts have paid off after months and years of intense preparation and conditioning. For many of them, it took immense personal and financial sacrifice to be chosen as the best among their peers. They understood the impact of the games and had their eyes set on the prize. Giving up was not an option as they remained motivated to stay on course

through many challenges and obstacles. The spirit of these athletes is endearing and should be emulated by all. But these days, resilience is fleeting as most easily give up at the slightest challenge or do not have the temerity to excel in today’s society, especially, at the workplace. Upon arrival in Canada, they expect a life without much challenges, a bed of roses, of sorts. An African gentleman once complained that he has been asked to return to school to seek better credentials. While he did not see the need for such an endeavor, he later came to realize after many unsuccessful job search escapades that re-credentialing was after all not a bad idea. It’s imperative

to realize that it takes enormous sacrifices to achieve personal and professional successes. Given the daunting challenges in the Canadian society, most immigrants have simply grown complacent, accepting the status quo and disinterested in improving their lot. They appear content with their job situation as long as it puts them in better stead than they were in their native countries. But they fail to realize that a little training, re-credentialing, etc., a slight inconvenience can be the tonic needed to advance to the next level and turn one’s fortune around. Like the Olympic athletes, we must stay motivated and focused on the prize.



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HOW NOT TO RAISE YOUR CHILDREN IN NORTH AMERICA

BY LADIPO ABIODUN

It begins with the language spoken in the home. It is often the case that parents who share the same Nigerian language speak English to their children at home even when the children are just babies and toddlers. This is a waste of the child's wide repertoire for learning new things, including new languages. Various psychologists and socio-linguists opine that every child is imbued with an innate ability to acquire a language. What parents need to do is place that child in close proximity to the language and the child would pick it up effortlessly. Parents unwittingly underestimate the child's capacity to learn the parents' native language, internalize it as perfectly as the parents do and use it as appropriately as the parents do.

By not speaking their native language to their children, parents deny their children the three theories of language acquisition: imitation, reinforcement and active construction of grammar. Parents also, by speaking our adulterated, impure American English to the children, unwittingly impede or, in fact, destroy the children's ability to learn American English in its purest form. Most of us who arrived in the US after 12 years of age or after puberty (according to socio-linguists) have forever lost the capacity to learn American English like a native speaker.

We come from Nigeria with our breathy alphabets, twisted consonants, misplaced stresses, wrong diction, abbreviated vocabulary, and we unknowingly impose these habits on our children. Our imperfect American English is what we expose our children to, and through the three theories of language acquisition mentioned above, our children acquire our poor English. We do not recognize the fact just as our parents did not sit us down to teach us our native Nigerian languages, our children would naturally and effortlessly learn from their friends at the nursery, higher schools and playgrounds. They would learn and internalize American English by listening to the radio, watching the TV and other media outlets like movies and music.

It then goes on into subordinating or completely surrendering our entire mores to the American environment in which we live. Our children wake up and walk past us in the house without rendering the greeting of the day. Forget about girls kneeling down (as is the case with those of us from southern Nigeria) and boys prostrating (as is the case with Yoruba people); the children outright do not even utter the greeting of the day before asking us for whatever they want! A Nigerian man walked into his house with his friend in tow.

He found his two teenage boys playing video games in the living room. Rather than greet their father and the guest, the children unplugged their video player and relocated into their room. When the father went to them and chastised them for not having the decency to greet his friend, the boys told him the guest was the father's, not theirs! They didn't think they had the obligation to greet their parents' friends. Some, in fact, call their parents' friends by their first names! Forget "Uncle" or "Auntie." I agree it is probably too late to teach greetings manner to a teenage child, but where you find a teenage child too big to greet an elder, you will find one too big to do the dishes.

Continued on page 19



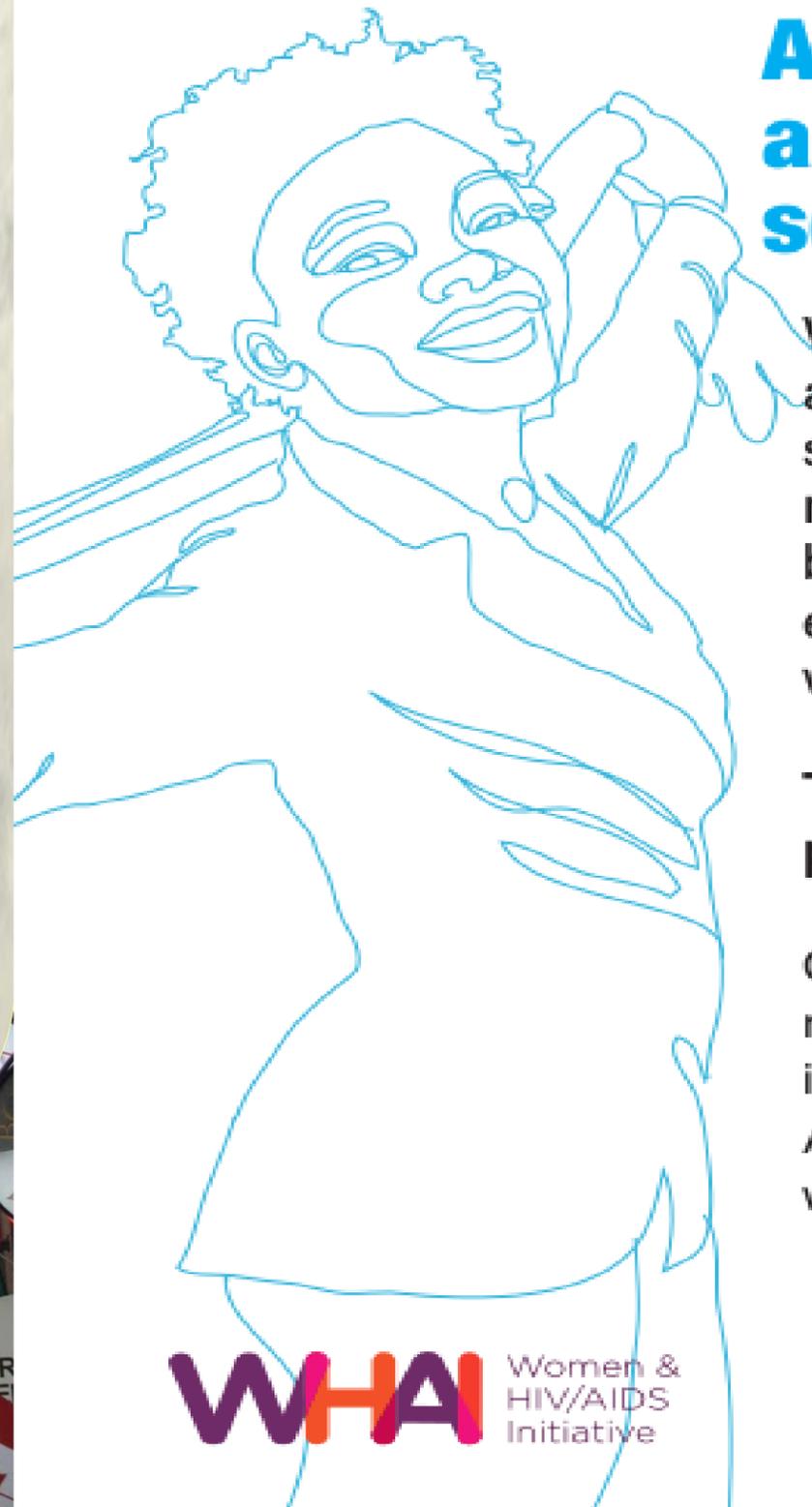
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AFRICAN SPIRITUALITY (10)

Did Africans know God before the Coming of Christianity?

Rev. Dr. Mantey Takes us through his fascinating narrative of life in African before the coming of Christianity

BY REV. DR. CHARLES MANTEY



Rev. Dr. Charles Mantey is the founder and Senior Pastor of Disciples Revival Church, Toronto, ON

Three non-Christian white men have come to live in Asiwa. Their lifestyles, attitude, and agenda are antithetical to the norms of Christianity. Undoubtedly, this has aroused great concern among the indigenes including the chief and his elders as well as members of the newly formed church. Dadzie has registered his displeasure by unleashing barrage of hard, soul-searching questions on his friend Dialo as he is looking for answers like anyone else. Dialo now finds himself between the rock and the hard place – part of him sees the wisdom in Dadzie’s argument

while the other believes the credibility of the missionaries and their agenda for propagating the gospel and bringing development and civilization to Asiwa and its environs. With a crest fallen face, with no confidence in his voice Dialo began to speak. He hardly could look straight into the eyes of his friend Dadzie as he was struggling and fumbling with words. Clearing his throat, tears streaming down his cheeks said; “Dadzie! I must admit that I am also confused and heartbroken.” He went on; “Last night, I had a long meeting with missionary Stewart and his wife Mara all in search of answers to recent

turn of events in our beloved community. They told me that this new group of white men in town are not part of their church in Britain. They also told me that in Britain, there are so many people who are not Christians. They live to the pleasures of this world; and...”

Dadzie quickly interrupted by saying: “If there are many people in their country who are not Christians, why didn’t they preach the so called gospel to them to be saved? Why will they leave all those sinners and travel to this remote place just to look for souls for their God? You and I know that in farming, you finish working on one farm before you start another.”

“You are right! But allow me to finish,” begged Dialo. He continued. “Stewart said there are so many preachers who have preached the gospel to millions of people in their country yet, majority of them decide not to believe in God. And the church sees it as a waste of time and resources; hence, the leadership of their church decided

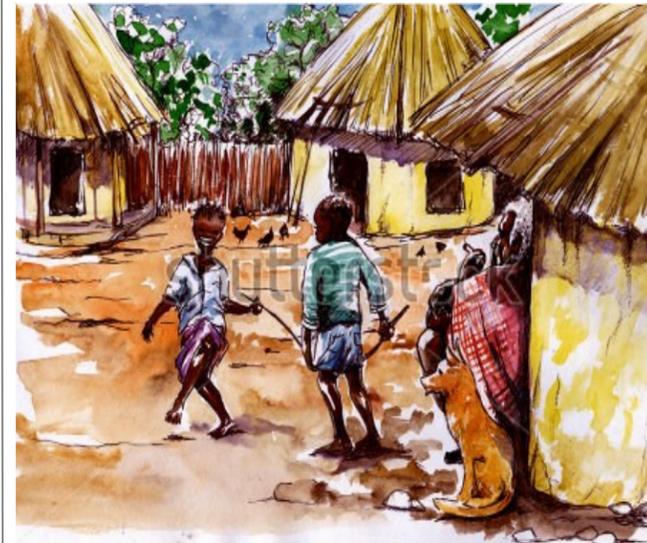
to send some of their members to Africa to preach the gospel.

They also said, the coming of the three other white men to Asiwa at a time that the church is taking root was nothing more than the work and plan of Satan. They explained to me that wherever God builds his temple, Satan will always pitch his tent adjacent to it; with the aim of fighting the vision and members of that church. It is for this reason that Christians always have to fast and pray.

The more the church prays, the less harm Satan can do to dismantle it. They concluded by saying: ‘Now, we know the spiritual atmosphere in Asiwa is muddier than before. We also know that your people are angry at us and are questioning our integrity. They are right to think that way. However, the Bible says in Matthew 11:12 “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and violence take it by force. “We are not going to leave .. **Continued on p. 15**

Continued from page 10

Asiwa; neither are we going to stop spreading the gospel. Our God is bigger and greater than Satan; we strongly believe in our hearts that all the negative things fermenting in this community will soon disappear.” The situation in Asiwa at this time perfectly replicates the coming of the missionaries to Africa and their effects both positively or negatively. To help us understand this dilemma between the missionaries and colonization of many African countries, Taiwo Olufemi in his book *How colonialism preempted modernity in Africa* explains: “Historians have established some differentiations among the ranks of European adventurers in Africa. They have identified three classes of Europeans – missionaries, traders, and administrators – among whose ranks we must include the military adventurers.” Olufemi con-



tinues: “I contend that colonialism, British colonialism, never meant to allow the colonized in Africa the option of choosing westernization/modernity/civilization. This is borne out by the consideration of the aims of the three major categories of colonizers: missionaries, ad-

ministrations, and traders. Of the three, it was the missionaries who, at least until about the third quarter of the nineteenth century, were the most desirous and, in some cases, more aggressive pursuers of the dream of making modern men out of Christian converts

and freed slaves.” Olufemi’s assessment helps us to understand the impact colonization and Christianity brought on Africans and the African continent. In as much as one can say that colonization undoubtedly accelerated Africa’s economic, social, and ethical plight, it is fair to say that most of the activities, especially, through the missionaries became the cradle of modern civilization and progress on the continent as we see today. The battle line is clearly drawn between the traditionalists and the Christians; how will the church respond to convince their members to stay? What other tools are left in Dadzie’s tool kits to fight his friend Dialo? **For the answer, stay tuned for the next issue. Please send comments to publisher@africanimmigrant.ca**



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