

Sonia  
HOLLIMON

# Color images

## Race barriers can create identity crises

I'll never forget the first time a white child pulled on my hair and asked me why my hair felt like a Brillo pad, and how come there weren't rubber bands or barrettes at

the ends of my braids? Why wasn't I the same color as my mom? Why this, why that, how come ... finally I got so frustrated that I poured my chocolate milk

on his head and yelled, "There! Now you're black, too!"

In junior high school in Elkhorn, once again, I was the only black person in school. My very first progress report claimed that I was adjusting extremely well to my new school. Of course, I only tried to rat and crimp my hair in the privacy of my own home. Once I tried to wear an oversized sweater with a tank top — you remember, like Madonna used to? My mom gave me a kiss on the cheek and dropped me off, right before reminding me that I wasn't white.

We went to a black Catholic church, and for a while I was really confused — white during the week, and black on the weekends. I didn't even bother going to dances — all I

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could do was the Jerk, and my mom had taught me that, so I knew it wasn't cool.

Patiently, my mom watched me struggle to live in both worlds. On one hand, I was getting a great education, but I didn't have anyone I could identify with at school. Mom made sure I knew what Kwanzaa was, and taught me to be proud of my black heritage, and God knows "The Cosby Show" smoothed a lot of rough spots.

What couldn't be smoothed was the fact that, after a while, I realized that none of the little boys I went to school with would ever be my "boyfriend" or invite me to a dance — not that I blame them. Elkhorn Middle School was tough enough if you didn't have Guess jeans — forget dealing with breaking the race barrier.

Everyone experiences low self-esteem and fear of rejection at some point in their lives. Dealing with these issues combined with racial tension and misunderstanding makes it even more difficult. More difficult still is being brainwashed into thinking that white is right and only blondes can be beautiful.

I remember when Mattel first came out with an African-American Barbie doll, man, I was excited. Until I realized that she was exactly the same as white Barbie, except in chocolate flavor. Her nose was even the same.

You know what that said to me at age 11? That I could be beautiful and successful and desirable — as long as I was just like a white girl. When Vanessa Williams became Miss America, I placed a big photo of her on my locker. When Marjorie

Vincent became Miss America, I put up an even bigger one — because America had finally realized that a dark-skinned black woman could be our ideal as well. If the Miss America competition is any indication, we as a society may be on the right track, since we've also had a deaf Miss America. Of course, it's hard to be sure what's going on with all this politically correct crap. I mean, the next year was Miss Oklahoma — can you say Oklahoma bombing?

When I came to college and saw all the interracial couples, I thought it was great — until I found it difficult to get a brother to speak to me some days, much less ask me out. For those who don't know, it's polite to speak when you see a fellow African-American. My favorite is when I see a black male with a white female and he deliberately averts his eyes. While I'm mature enough to know that I'm beautiful just the color I am, it's still a little disappointing.

The number one excuse in Nebraska for cultural ignorance is "But, I was raised in an all-white town!" Guess what, baby, so was I. What's your excuse?

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# Deep-rooted hatred

## Too many lives wasted in Holy Land riots

With the recent controversial opening of an archaeological tunnel in east Jerusalem near Muslim and Jewish holy sites, the spectre of violence has again reared its ugly

head. In the ensuing riots, more than 70 lives were lost, as one side felt opening the tunnel was harmless, and the other side felt the tunnel was a power

play.

The hastily arranged summit in Washington, D.C., has done nothing to alleviate the tension in the area — where the ability to be stubborn is considered virtuous. All the principals in this drama are still on a path spiralling to nowhere fast. Perhaps it's time to take drastic measures.

What measures am I talking about here? Well, like, move everyone out of Jerusalem and drop a low-yield nuclear device on it — or level the city with a big-ass bulldozer. Might seem too harsh, but that area of the world is still a bite-in-our-collective-asses waiting to happen.

Well, at the very least, deny everyone the privilege (it's not a right) of living there. Make it into a Disneyland of religion (not with rides per se, but where people can only visit, not reside). Draconian and impractical? Yes. Crazy idea? No, not really.

OK, so dropping a bomb to

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destroy a city won't solve all of the animosity built up over generations of distrust and failed promises. But Jerusalem, the city, actually plays a large role in this tension.

Being a Roman Catholic, it pains me to no end to take this stance. Jerusalem holds import for three major religions of the world: Judaism, Islam and Christianity. And it's also a city where perhaps more blood has been spilled per square inch than any other city — all to be able to claim rights to dirt. That's right — dirt. Remove all of the religious connotations of Jerusalem and that's all that's left. Dirt.

Sure there are intrinsic religious qualities to Jerusalem — the structures and artifacts, monuments to the past.

But there are intrinsic qualities in other aspects of religion, too.

Finding the Holy Grail would add another pillar in my faith for Roman Catholicism. But if having the Grail means killing one another over generations, it's time to destroy it — or at least blast it into space so no one can claim they have it. As long as it exists and is an achievable "objective," someone, somewhere out there will want to fight for it — and sacrilegiously "in God's name."

It's a simplified view, but pretty damn close to the way I feel. And that's what's going on in Jerusalem. All the parties involved claim rights to the land dating to biblical times. But that's just it: land. The argument is that God has told one party to have that land — or that members of another party have claims to it because they have been there for so long.

I just have a hard time swallowing

this pill. I believe in God. I believe in God's (whether God is a He or She, I don't care) power.

See, my view is that God is a scientist. God set the spark of the big bang and sat back and watched. A being as powerful as Creator of the universe doesn't need to have land claimed in God's name. God is powerful enough to make the universe, so why should a tract of land matter?

I've always felt that fighting for a cause is a noble idea. But when it involves destroying one another because of a difference in belief, it's ridiculous.

A lot of us believe in one supreme being, and even if we don't, we pretty much agree that killing one another is pointless. But the name by which we address the Creator matters not. But some of us feel strongly enough to kill in our Maker's name. Not right.

If we are all truly the result of an all-powerful being, then why do we go about as if this isn't true? I'm sick and tired of people misusing religion to further their own physical greed or ego-stroking.

I don't profess to speak for any higher moral authority. But a being such as God couldn't be pleased with our actions. This past week more 70 lives were lost because of fighting over a city. Lives wasted.

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