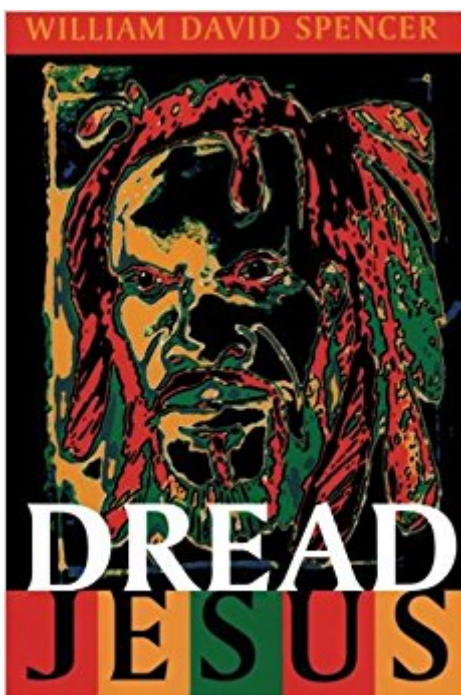


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# Dread Jesus



## Synopsis

'Dread Jesus' explores the black, dreadlocked Jesus taken from Christianity by the teachings of Rastafari. Is Rastafari simply a bizarre Christian cult, destined to fade if the Emperor Haile Selassie never reappears? Or could it become a vibrant two-thirds world reform movement, recalling Christianity to its original, non-oppressing gospel for all people? Rigorously researched, William David Spencer's unique and compelling study - which includes exclusive interviews with major Rastafarian thinkers and close analysis of the lyrics of many reggae songs - will prove genuinely accessible to anyone who wishes to learn more about Rastafari and its significance for global Christianity.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In the beginning I considered three stars and that the primary target readership would be non-Rastafarl, to get merely informed, with however many shortcomings of this 1999 book. In that light, the book would have been rated more highly for Rastafarl, as I-and-I would have seen through some non-overstandings of the book and actually gotten informed to a higher degree. As the book contragresses it becomes clear that the primary targets are Rastas I-n-lselves after all - to get proselytized into churches. The book turns into a worse piece of anti-Rasta propaganda by the chapter and personally, I care for it as much as the lowest rating. However, having endured 'The Isis Papers: The Keys to the Colors' recently, I should reserve that category for the indeed even much worse books with absolutely no shred of value whatsoever. "Dread Jesus" does start somewhat promising for a non-authentic book, e.g. Rastas having corrected the first one to three

chapters. Exactly: not the rest and that for a reason. The author avoids some of the usual mistakes and makes clear that Rastas may be of all skin colors, do not engage in dogmas and doctrines, but are everprogressing via reasonings and interviews some from outside Jamaica. Occasionally he's only descriptive, correcting some wrong assumptions afterwards. There are some factual errors. Many influences converged to the Rasta use of the term "Jah". It is NOT a mistaken abbreviation for "Jahwe", even though the relationship is obvious. Many Rastas are currently not aware of it either: The ancient African, Judaism-preceding terminology refers to Jah, the female version of Jahwe. For details read *The Africans Who Wrote the Bible*. The latter is also one of the many books providing REAL knowledge that I-Yasus/Jesus was Black, as "Dread Jesus" provides only pseudo-knowledge to discredit the claim of knowledge. I may add, the skin color is irrelevant other than in correcting colonial propoganda. Important is the overstanding that Iverybody is Black. Many suffer from collective amnesia and that's making them White. No wonder "Dread Jesus" still speculates wether "Adam and Eve" where Black. The CONCEPT is White, the first humans of course were Black, if those are really referred to. And now for the anti-Rasta propoganda hurled at Rastas. Rastafarl would be derived from anything: Hinduism, Masonic Orders, German Rosicrucianism, Mormons, you name it, even a freaking UFO-sect link is averred. It is true that various branches of religion find their way to Rastafarl and/or are partly compatible. Yet mostly not in the way and to the degree as described. Interesting is what the author omits: basically any African roots. He also forgets to mention that all of the supposed and real religious sources provided originate in Ancient Egyptian religion, which in turn is derived from Ethiopia. The unsuspecting reader will get their prejudices confirmed. Any Rasta sightings would be drug induced nonsense (even providing a Bible quote supposedly against ganja, omitting the one in favor), Rasta theology equalling heretic paganism and that Rastas can't even speak and think cohesively. The author contrasts his formal thesaurus-ridden writings with the EXACT reproduction of his taped interviews with Rastas. For those who don't know: No interview with stars or politicians you read in a magazine are the literal words. (In contrast: Speeches are usually read fluently.) Many half-sentences etc. are transformed into a readable condition. Not here! In addition, the author fails to explain Patois and doesn't even mention Iyoric (few examples of you are reading in this review). The latter makes the grammar APPEAR to be a mess, e.g. when exchanging grammatical "they" with political "them". Fascinating to follow the continuum of the quotes' presented coherency according to how much the author agrees. Which he does most with the converts to a church. These are then paternalizingly described as the most astute or articulate Rastas. The others have to get "gently explained" to or given a "wise program of kind, caring, sympathetic instruction". Dear William David Spencer, it isn't a matter wether you have

integrated fancy words like "effervescing" in your active vocabulary, but whether your words mirror your mind. He is aware of that and uses selected standard lyrical vocabulary like "overstand" and "downpress". Yet, he writes that two major streams "have come down" from Rastafari, which has moved "out of Christianity" etc. Almost funny is the very title of his book. Referring to I-Yasus with dreadlocks, he's actually headlining a catchy "Fear Jesus!". Or to be more precise: If you DREAD something which is going to happen or which may happen, you feel very unhappy and worried about it because you know or think that it will be very unpleasant. That's what the British-Jamaican slave buyers thought when catching a glimpse of the torture ships' cargo getting unloaded, resulting in the terms "dreadlocks". This author is still in dread today, dreading Rastafari philosophy, dreading "Jesus". Otherwise he wouldn't blind the Gnostic teachings of Christianity he is grossly misrepresenting. He would attempt to overstand I-Yasus' teachings better, the way many Rastas do. He wouldn't neglect the other standard lyrical spelling of "Rastafari" with a capital I and Haile Selassie-I hyphenated to be pronounced not like a Roman numeral. For there's spirituality in the wording, like in "I-and-I". A spirituality, the author is combating with all his might. His book largely is concerned with the questions to Rastas: Is Haile Selassie-I Jesus? Is H.I.M. God? Is Jesus God? Can God be a human? Reducing the concepts to worst possible, anti-mystic overstandings. Not sighting the universal mystic knowledge that EVERYTHING is Jah/God. That includes Haile Selassie-I, I-Yasus, William David Spencer, I ("me"), the I ("you" the reader), and the chair the I is sitting on. The questions of above are to be answered in accordance to the awareness of the respective humans referred to and those asked and to the function/destiny the former are meant to fulfill. With that in mind it becomes perfectly clear why Haile Selassie-I made it to be known - like I-Yasus did - that salvation is not to be expected to come from any one separated savior/God, but via a part of the savior/God making I-n-I overstand that the I-n-I (they, the saviors) are I-n-I ("us") as well. Therefore the salvation lies in "ourselves", once all the artificial separations have been eliminated in the mind's constructs. The author neglects to mention the sign of Divinity's descent into the world Haile Selassie-I is usually displaying with his hands on photographs and curiously doesn't wonder about the SELF-GIVEN nature of the name "Might of the Holy Trinity", even though talking about it in general a lot. And whoever claimed, Haile Selassie-I sent the Ethiopian Tewahedo Church to Jamaica to teach Rastafari? Ever thought about a vice versa teaching? H.I.M. "mysteriously" reformed every level of society in Ethiopia, why should he leave out the Church? I am almost sure, the author is happy to hear that today the very necessary purpose of Haile Selassie-I's supposed fall from power and execution has been sighted. There isn't the saying "Jah works in mysterious ways" for nothing. If it wouldn't seem mysterious at the time it happens, it wouldn't have

been necessary to happen. It is supposed to be overstood later. Which has become possible for limited humans some 30 years later. Ironically, the author provides a lot of quotes from Haile Selassie-I, I-Yasus and Rastafarl, but doesn't overstand them, otherwise he wouldn't attempt to use them as counter arguments. It isn't Rastafarl who are ignorant to Haile Selassie-I as he claims, but he himself. For a universal mystic overstanding read *The Mystical Journey from Jesus to Christ* and *From Science to God: A Physicist's Journey into the Mystery of Consciousness*. Then you will learn that it doesn't matter, which branch of religion opens the door to Jah/God/the universe/etc., be it Gnostic or Sufi teachings, Vedanta philosophy of Hinduism, Maat, science,... or Rastafarl. My upwise for the author is: Do not waste your mind with the colonial missionary stunt. Would you overstand the mysticism of your branch of religion, you wouldn't blind yourself to the egoistic (= unholy) idea of having to forcefeed your branch's myths and rituals into others' throats. For it becomes obvious that the author is also afraid that if the churches won't proselytize Rastafarl, Muslims would win the race. It is insulting to get degraded to subjects to get fought over for assimilation. The author wants to proselytize Rastafarl under the umbrella of the Council of Nicaea. What he's omitting is that this council also was the measure against any Gnostic variations (i.e. against the universal knowledge of Oneness), in fact, against anything else than the absolute dogmas of the ultra-hierarchical church. Following that council, severe persecutions of any individually varying overstanding were blank chequed for centuries. The superficial concessions made to Rastas here are to be seen in the shadow of the integration of any branch of religion into Church Christianity in order to control everything and to neutralize any potential philosophical threat. At least, the (other) church pastor author of *From Garvey to Marley: Rastafari Theology (History of African-American Religions)* respected Rastafarl and didn't attempt to proselytize. "Dread Jesus" is even referencing *The Ethiopian Tewahedo Church: An Integrally African Church* and *Rastafari: For the Healing of the Nation* in a continuously misleading way. One last word: I am not impressed with any reggae star whatsoever "converting" into any church. I simply couldn't care less.

This is the book that I have been waiting for, for a very a long time, so I can't really express my hapiness with it's existance. It is a must read for every Jesus Dread and others interested in the relationship between Rastafari and Christianity. The writer explores "Rastafarian Christology", by analysing many reggae songs, interviewing many known and lesser known Rastafarians, and studying the history of Rastafari. He finds out, that there are two main streams witin Rastafari, one is inspired by Hindu and esotherical teachings, while the other group is heading towards Christianity

more and more, even to such an extent that brother William describes the possibility of a "Selassian Church", as a denomination next to Lutheran and the like. Well documented and thoroughly investigated, this book is blessed to be a good source for forming your own opinion. I would recommend it especially for those Christians that always were told, that all Rastafarians believe in Selassie as God, as it explains the various interpretations about Yesus Kristus that exist within the movement. Dread Jesus also contains a testimony from sistren Judy Mowatt, former member of Bob Marley & the Wailer's backing trio "the I-Threes". You can read how she described the process in her life that made her come to the conclusion that Selassie is not Yesus Kristus, and some struggles and blessings that she has experienced during these times. This is one of the first Christian publications on Rastafari that does not contain the bias prejudice that you find so rampant in the Christian World. It's not yet another cheap description of a movement supposedly existing of weird herb smokers with long uncombed hair. Haile Selassie's Christianity is described and studied. His relationship with the evangelical world, where well known Christian Evangelist Billy Graham invited His Majesty to open a congress in Berlin in 1966, an invitation accepted by Haile Selassie. You can read portions of the speech that HIM held in front of 1000's of evangelical Christians, a speech not often quoted. Good for reading, good for studying, good for meditation, good for having as resource, I want to big up this book for it can be a blessing for all Jesus Dreads worldwide.

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