

CHRISTIAN REGGAE RE-DISCOVERED



An interview with Christafari's Mark Mohr about the S.T.A.R. Christian Reggae network



By Messiah Dread

This document was downloaded for free from <http://www.dubroom.com>
Please do not re-distribute or re-publish without consent from the author
Website S.T.A.R. Network: <http://www.star.dubroom.org>
Website Christafari: <http://www.christafari.com>

Toots and the Maytalls, Willy Williams, Yabby You, Sugar Minott, Lt. Stitchie, Papa San, Carlene Davis. A few names of christian Jamaican artists. And this list is absolutely not complete. Christian reggae is as old as reggae itself. It is not a musical style, such as roots or dancehall, but a spiritual movement. A movement as diverse as the movement of Rastafari, with whom christian reggae is also closely connected. Many Rastafarians today do no longer see Haile Selassie as God, and by this they are abiding by the wish of His Majesty, that he should not be worshipped. Some become evangelical christians like Sistren Judy Mowatt, others become Ethiopian Orthodox (as Bob Marley did in his final days on earth).

In the 1990's the reggaeband Christafari was formed. This band quickly became one of America's most succell reggae-acts and introduced reggae-music to a brand new audience: the american and europan gospel lovers. Christafari's main man Mark Mohr is known to be a very active man, and one of his activities was to form a Christian Network along with Christian reggae DJ Travis Freeman, based after the idea of Reggae Ambassadors Worldwide (raw). Christians of any kind, from evangelical/charismatic to ethiopian orthodox, can join the Sanctified Truth Ambassadors of Reggae (star) where they can establish contacts for their recordings (as artists), or stage-shows (as concert organizers) et cetera or enjoy felloship. I went to Mark Mohr with some questions about S.T.A.R. and this is what he said.

The Dubroom About star, I would like to know what's the main reason to have it?

MARK: When I started performing Christian Reggae in 1989, I thought that it was so original. I thought that I was the only person in the world doing it. I felt alone and it was hard to be a trailblazer. As the years passed I began learning about a few other Christian reggae musicians that had great potential but were literally unknown in the U.S. This concerned me. My personal vision for STAR from the beginning was to put together a database of all of these artists. I wanted to unite these artists and give them a networking system for them to connect with each other, labels, managers, agents, labels, radio stations, etc..... My goal was to promote, encourage and empower these artists. Instead of being scattered, and considered a novelty, I wanted Gospel reggae to be a united force that could not be ignored.

The Dubroom What is the differences between raw and star apart from the religious aspect?

MARK: There is no denying that STAR was patterned after RAW. For years Christafari has been a RAW member (#304). In my mind it is almost a sub-group of RAW. It does everything that RAW does but is smaller and more intimate. You can get lost in the RAW system. It is also definitely more specialized with a narrower focus on Christian Reggae/Ska. And in comparison to RAW, it is free.

The Dubroom Is it mainly evangelical/charismatic, or since it is outernational, is it also outer-denominational?

MARK: STAR is a Non-Denominational organization that has interdenominational members. Our members represent a wide spectrum of denominations and churches within the Judeo Christian faith.

The Dubroom Are there any plans to organize a star CD or other projects?

MARK: Yes, we have talked about making one. Lion of Zion is currently working on future compilation projects that will consist of STAR members. We are very excited about the uniting of such powerful forces. We anticipate to have the first compilation out within a year.

The Dubroom Something known already of people meeting each other in star and started projects together?

MARK: Not that I know of, but I am sure that there are some great things in the works. Up until now it has probably served more as an educational tool empowering those who are starting up in their music ministry. In the last year Christafari has had the privilege of performing on stage with many STAR members/bands in different countries. This has been a great experience. Also, I know that many artists have gotten their music played by other STAR DJs.

This network is absolutely not for the honour and glory of Christafari. Although it is Mark Mohr who was involved in the starting process of this network, I personally have found a diversity in STAR. I find this diversity necessary, because christian reggae surely is not limited to the style of Christafari. There is members from all over the world, and the shared believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is much stronger then denominational (church) differences. In itself, this show the many colors of the wisdom of Jah. I am sure Haile Selassie would approve this network. On the other hand, some of my Idrens that I know do not want to become a member because they do not like any organization. I can overstand this very good and ofcourse I respect this. It is just for those that feel like it is good to have this network.