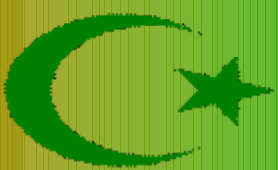

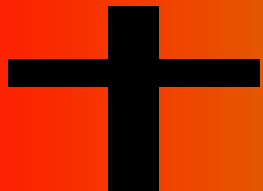


MARCUS GARVEY

17th August 1887 - 10th June 1940

The
UNIA
worked constructively
with
**Christians
& Moslems**



Marcus Garvey Organising Committee

The Pan Afrikan People's Phone-in
Every Sunday 10pm – 12midnight



PAPP Galaxy Radio PAPP

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Phone Number (for on air discussion): 07908 117 619

The Pan-Afrikan People's Phone-in is a space for themed interactive discussions conducted over the airwaves and cyberspace. The themes are focused around issues affecting Afrikan people both locally and globally.

The Pan-Afrikan People's Phone-in regularly features guests from revolutionary Pan-Afrikanist organisations. From time to time others including non-Afrikan guests will be invited to contribute. The activities of all guests will be examined on the basis of their relevance to Afrikan people locally and worldwide. Interviews and presentations with guests will set the scene for the more general discussion (in the second half of the programme) where listeners will be invited to phone in, ask questions and contribute.

Spread the word: Please tell all of your family, friends, fellow organisation members, colleagues, associates and other networks about the show. Encourage them to listen.

The UNIA worked constructively with Christians & Moslems

1. Introduction

1.1 Recommendations

It is proposed that the Marcus Garvey Organising Committee (MGOC), an operational task force of the Pan-Afrikan Society Community Forum (PASCf) adopt the following recommendations:

1. That the MGOC recognises that it is historically and factually correct to acknowledge that the UNIA, under the leadership of Marcus Garvey, worked constructively to unite Afrikan people regardless of their religious persuasion;
2. That the MGOC recognises that it is historically and factually correct to acknowledge that the UNIA, under the leadership of Marcus Garvey, worked constructively with Christians and Moslems;
3. That the MGOC recognises that it is historically and factually correct to acknowledge that the UNIA, under the leadership of Marcus Garvey, recognised that the following behaviours were methods for spreading division within the Afrikan community:
 - a. the attacking of Afrikan people's religions;
 - b. attempts to force personal religious beliefs on to others;
 - c. the pushing of personal religious beliefs to the fore in primarily non-religious environments;
4. That the MGOC recognises that it is not possible to unite Afrikan people around the world under the banner of any single religious system;
5. That the MGOC adopt the paper *Marcus Garvey was a Christian* as part of its political education literature;
6. That the MGOC adopt this paper entitled *Marcus Garvey worked constructively with Christians and Moslems* as part of its political education literature;
7. That the MGOC adopt the accompanying fact sheet entitled *The UNIA & Religion* as part of its political education literature;
8. That the MGOC adopt a policy of religious tolerance with:
 - a. Freedom of religious worship;
 - b. Freedom to be an atheist or an agnostic;
 - c. A commitment to actively discourage the practice of attacking other people's religious beliefs;
 - d. A commitment to actively discourage the kind of religious chauvinism that attempts to impose personal religious beliefs on to others, and;
 - e. A commitment to actively discourage the kind of religious chauvinism that attempts to push personal religious beliefs to the fore in environments that are primarily non-religious;
9. That the MGOC actively encourage Afrikan people of whatever religious persuasion to join or participate in the activities of the committee;

- a. With no requirement that anybody change their religious persuasion;
10. That membership and officer roles in the MGOC be open to Afrikan people regardless of their religious persuasion:
 - a. Where clarification is needed, the MGOC will be the final arbiter on the working interpretation of who is an Afrikan person;
11. That the MGOC create an outreach team with a remit of interacting with Afrikan groups of religious or secular persuasion;
12. That the MGOC adopt a policy of encouraging Afrikan unity through practically orientated joint working projects;
13. That the final decision on these recommendations be deferred until July 2008 to allow papers containing different perspectives to be considered alongside this one;
14. That the MGOC reserve the right to revise any of the above decisions in the light of new evidence.

1.2 Background

In the last quarter of 2006 the paper *Conceptions and misconceptions of Garvey and Garveyism* was circulated amongst members of the MGOC for consideration. The paper included a section on entitled 'Garvey on Religion'. One of the groups in the MGOC asked for a forum to discuss the issues raised and this was accommodated during the 2007 series of Marcus Garvey Afrikan Family Day (MGAFD) workshops.

This paper comes about as a direct result of the 2007 series of Marcus Garvey Afrikan Family Day (MGAFD) workshops. It addresses a number of issues raised in the 6th workshop in the series entitled *Garvey's ideas and actions on religious practice in the liberation struggle* held on 28th August 2007.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of this document are as follows:

1. To set out a body of factual information illustrating how the UNIA, under the leadership of Marcus Garvey, behaved in its interactions with different religious groups;
2. To establish the fact that Marcus Garvey was a Christian;
3. To establish the fact the UNIA under the leadership of Marcus Garvey worked constructively with Christian and Moslem organisations to pursue the objective of Afrikan liberation:
 - o Was tolerant of other people's religions;
 - o Opposed the attacking of other people's religions;
4. To establish the fact that the UNIA under the leadership of Marcus Garvey saw 'race' and not religion as the basis for organising Afrikan people worldwide;

5. To establish the fact that the UNIA under the leadership of Marcus Garvey saw mastery of science as the ultimate way forward for Afrikan people;
6. To suggest that the actions of Garveyites should, in the first instance, be guided by the policies that the UNIA practiced under Marcus Garvey's leadership;
7. To encourage the reader to make further enquiries into the practices of the UNIA.

2 Garvey's religious beliefs

2.1 Evidence that Garvey was a Christian

Garvey's classic phrase 'One God, one aim one destiny' (Garvey, 1986, p. 415) stands as testimony to the importance that he attached to the supreme being. It is clear that Garvey believed in God and he appears to have been a Christian all his life. His mother and father were both Christians of the Methodist denomination (Huntley, 1988, p. 5; Garvey, 1986, p. 124) and he attended an Anglican secondary school (UNIA-Timeline). Marcus later converted to Catholicism and was married to his first wife Amy Ashwood Garvey under the rules of Catholicism:

"After their long courtship, [Amy] Ashwood and Garvey were married in a private Catholic church ceremony, followed by an elaborate public ceremony and reception at Liberty Hall, on Christmas Day, 1919." (American Experience).

However, the most potent evidence that he was a Christian came when at the age of 37 (almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through his life) he testified under oath that:

"... the records will show ... that I have always been a Christian and was confirmed by the Catholic Bishop who testified on my behalf." (Garvey, 1986, p. 252).

A secondary source comes from Reverend Philip Potter, a former secretary of the World Council of Churches. He expressed the opinion that Garvey was a Christian when he reported that:

"On the 31st October 1937 ... I saw and heard Garvey speak in my home island of Dominica ... The fact that Garvey spoke as a Christian and as one whose inspiration came from the prophetic message of the bible had a powerful effect on me and has remained with me until this day ..."
(Hart, 2002, p. 66).

If the Reverend's observation was correct, then this would suggest that Garvey was still a Christian to within three years of the end of his life.

There seems to have been three people involved in the nursing of Garvey in the latter stages of his fatal illness. These were: Mrs. Youssof from Bechuanaland (now Botswana); Mr.

McIntyre from Grenada and Mrs. Whyte his English secretary. Amy Jacques Garvey explained that:

"Mrs. Whyte was an Anglican so she asked her minister to visit him; Mrs. Youssof was a Roman Catholic, and she asked a priest to see him, and [after that] a father Clark came regularly."
(Garvey, 1970, p. 261; Hart, 2002, p. 68).

Mrs. Whyte's actions suggest that Garvey's secretary did not recognise him as a Catholic; that is possibly an indicator that he was not a practicing Catholic, but does not exclude the possibility that he was a practicing Anglican. Whether or not Mrs. Youssof contacted the Catholic priest because Garvey was out of touch with Catholicism, or because he was too ill to make contact himself is not clear.

Furthermore, despite the known visits of the priest, there is no concrete proof that Garvey did or did not receive the seventh and final Catholic sacrament – the 'Last Rights' which would have verified conclusively that he was a Catholic when he passed. Nonetheless the fact that, given the choice, he saw the Anglican minister only once but saw the Catholic priest repeatedly is an indication of his affinity to Catholicism even in the final stages of his life. Whatever the possible permutations between denominations, it is clear that Garvey received some version of Christian ministry at the end of his life and did not refuse it.

Marcus Garvey crossed to meet the ancestors on 10th June 1940. On 14th June 1940:

"Garvey's remains [were] embalmed and interred in lower catacomb No. 322 in St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Kensal Green, London." (UNIA Timeline)

This is conclusive proof that Garvey was accepted into Catholicism prior to his death. Non-Catholics are not accepted into the Catholic cemetery in Kensal Green, London.

The most compelling historical evidence available indicates that Marcus Garvey was a Christian – though over time he seems to have developed connections with a number of different Christian denominations. However, it is not certain that he was an overtly practicing Christian. He appears to have been a questioning Christian; one whose commitment to Afrikan liberation was not bound by his Christianity. It is also important to note that there is an absence of historical evidence refuting the fact that he was a Christian or confirming that he had some other form of religious practice.

The historical record affirms that: Marcus Garvey told us that he was a Christian; the Bishop that confirmed him, told us that he was a Christian; his marriages to Amy Ashwood Garvey and Amy Jacques Garvey each told us that he was a Christian; His second wife Amy Jacques

Garvey told us that he was visited by an Anglican vicar, before being regularly visited by a Catholic priest in the final phases of his life. All of the best witnesses seem to agree that Marcus Garvey was a Christian.

3 UNIA approach to engaging with religious groupings

3.1 Christianity, Islam and Afrikan unity in the UNIA

In the early days of the UNIA Garvey advocated Christianity to the extent that the constitution of the organisation had as one of its objectives:

"To promote a conscientious Christian worship among the native tribes of Afrika." (Clarke, 1974, p. 60).

Although this objective was later to be amended with the word 'spiritual' inserted instead of 'Christian', this early objective seems to have had a significant impact on the character of the organisation. Many of the UNIA's strategies for working with religious groups seem to have been focused on linking with and influencing Christian congregations. The UNIA established its own Afrikan Orthodox Church which was designed to bring Afrikan Catholics and Protestants together under one Christian banner (African Orthodox Church Archives; Marcus Garvey). Even though it was a Christian church, Garvey was determined that it should not contradict either traditional Afrikan spirituality or Islam. He explained:

"It is a species of Christianity quite in keeping with the name of 'the Church of Ethiopia', and which in the Dark Continent at any rate, is to such an extent in touch with certain forms of Mohammedanism, and retains so many elements of former Paganism that it does not constitute any obstacle to the co-operation of blacks of every creed and denomination against those who they are more and more coming to regard as their common enemy, the whites." (Garvey, 1970, p. 56).

Despite this fact, some members were clearly under the impression that the UNIA was, to all intents and purposes, a Christian organisation. This feeling was so strong that there was even a vote at the 1924 convention, aimed at making Christianity the official religion of the UNIA.

However, during the hotly contested discussions, the case was made that there were more Afrikan Moslems in the world than there were Afrikan Christians and that by making the organisation a Christian organisation, they were effectively excluding the majority of Afrikan people from membership. As a result of the deliberations, the UNIA convention:

"... decided that, as there are Moslems and other non-Christians that are Garveyites, it was not wise to declare Christianity the official religion of the organisation ... [as an alternative] ...

Christians who were not members of the church could join the Afrikan Orthodox Church.”
(Garvey, 1970, p. 141).

The fact that the majority of Afrikan people in Afrika were Moslems rather than Christians may have provided the rationale for amending one of the original UNIA religious objectives to read:

“To promote a conscientious spiritual worship among the native tribes of Afrika.” (Garvey, 1986, p. 38; Martin, 1988, p. 31).

In this updated version the word ‘Christian’ was replaced by the word ‘spiritual’.

Two years prior in the UNIA’s 1922 convention, a group of Moslem members had tried to have Islam adopted as the official religion of the UNIA, but this attempt was unsuccessful (Latif, 1994, p. 343). These outcomes seem to have confirmed the fact that the UNIA had large contingents of both Moslems and Christians amongst its membership. It also confirmed the idea that neither Christianity nor Islam could operate as the unifying force for Afrikan people worldwide. Whilst later reflecting on the relative merits of the two religions’ claims to being a unifying force for Afrikan people, Amy Jacques Garvey made the observation that:

“Mohammedanism is more of a unifying religious force in Afrika than the Christian religion, splintered as it is into many denominations ...” (Garvey, 1970, p. 275).

This was a small consolation for UNIA members of the Islamic faith because one of the main ideas that was clarified as a result of the convention debates was that no single religion was capable of uniting all of the Afrikan people of the world. This position was later re-affirmed by Amy Jacques Garvey who argued that Marcus did not see religion as the focal point for uniting a nation. Garveyism differs from those forces that believe we must all worship in the same way before we can unify and progress as a people. She explained that Garveyism observed that:

“The only ground on which white people are really united is RACE; neither language, religion, nor political systems have as cohesive a force for all nations ...” (Garvey, 1970, p. 269).

Whilst this observation about unity was made in relation to Europeans, the UNIA convention debates had shown that it was also true for Afrikan people in the Garvey movement. By November 1922 the experiences of the UNIA led to Marcus Garvey pronouncing as a principle the fact that:

“... the UNIA is not advocating the cause of church building, because we have sufficiently large number of churches among us to minister to the spiritual needs of the people, and we not going to

compete with those who are engaged in so splendid a work ... We are not engaged ... in church building ... we are engaged in nation building." (Garvey, 1986, p. 94).

It became clear that it would not be possible to unite the Afrikan world under the banner of Christianity, Islam or any other single spiritual or religious belief system. Using religion to unite the Afrikan world was therefore dismissed as unworkable.

3.2 Garvey was for religious tolerance

The intense religious debates also made Garvey aware of the potential for the differing religions or even differing religious denominations to argue and perpetuate splits among themselves. It seems likely that Garvey realised that arguments over which religious form provided the best mechanism for 'properly' revering God were ultimately irresolvable and futile. This calibre of religious argument was potentially disastrous, because Afrikan people embroiled in it could be driven into a permanent state of inter-denominational rivalry.

Such rivalry among religious Afrikans was the last thing that Garvey wanted because this contradicted his primary objective of promoting Afrikan unity as a means to Afrikan self-government. It is possible that the UNIA slogan 'One God! One Aim! One Destiny!' (Garvey, 1986, p. 38 & 415) was, in part, devised to emphasise the fact that all monotheistic religions ultimately worship one God – the same God. The potential for splits and rivalries could be countered and the potential for unity heightened by emphasising this crucial and central factor that all monotheistic religions had in common.

It is clear that Garvey was personally fully supportive of religious tolerance. In his attempts to minimise unhelpful religious rivalries and to promote unity he emphatically expressed the view that:

"... We are all entitled to our religious beliefs." (Sons of Garvey Press Association, 1990, p. 24).

As has been seen, there were intense religious debates taking place in the UNIA over the direction of the religious strategy of the organisation. It was possibly as a result of these debates that Garvey felt it was necessary to make it clear that in the UNIA:

"You may be a Christian; you may be a Muhammadan; that is your religion." (Sons of Garvey Press Association, 1990, p. 24).

He was not simply espousing a personal position when he made these statements. This was the collectively agreed organisational position of the UNIA. The organisation's complete tolerance of religious expression was reiterated by Item 28 of the UNIA declaration of rights which states:

"We declare for the freedom of religious worship." (Clarke, 1974, p. 443 – 451; Garvey, 1986, p. 135 – 143).

It is clear that the UNIA treated religious tolerance as a matter of fundamental importance because there is no history of the organisation interpreting any religion as the enemy of Afrikan people. There was never any question of excluding people from the UNIA, condemning them, or in any way making them feel less worthy on the basis of their religious affiliations.

Although Garvey was a Christian, he was both respectful and tolerant of Islam. In 1912 Garvey came to England and experienced racism at the very heart of British imperialism. While there he became closely associated with Duse Mohammed Ali, an Egyptian Islamic scholar born in Egypt and descended from Sudanese Afrikans. In many respects Duse Mohammed Ali operated as a kind of mentor to Marcus Garvey:

"Another African who influenced Garvey was Duse Mohammed Ali (1867-1944), an Egyptian of Sudanese ancestry. Duse was active in Pan-Afrikan circles in London where he tutored the young Garvey." (Lemelle, 1992, p. 86).

The relationship between Duse Mohammed Ali and Marcus Garvey is clear evidence of Garvey's respect for Islamic believers.

Furthermore, Amy Jacques Garvey confirms that UNIA members came from a range of religious denominations and reminded us that the founder of the Nation of Islam, the honourable Elijah Mohammad was formerly a corporal in the uniformed ranks of the Chicago division of the UNIA. Also Malcolm X's father Earl Little, a Christian minister, was vice-president of the Detroit division of the UNIA. (Garvey, 1970, p. 305).

3.3 Garvey was actively opposed to the practice of attacking other people's religions

Garvey stood for Afrikan unity, he was therefore opposed to those forces that used their energy to attack religions, on the grounds that they caused Afrikan subjugation. He understood that it was the way that the controllers of religions used the religion that contributed to Afrikan subjugation, which was distinct from the religion itself. Since the UNIA was predominantly a Christian organisation, he actively defended Christianity and responded disparagingly to critics of the UNIA that:

"... maligned the great movement of the Christian religion ..." (Garvey, 1970, p. 126).

As an experienced organiser, Garvey understood that attacking religions was a counterproductive exercise. When their religion is attacked, the 'adherents' instinctively believe the attack to be unjustified. They tend to become resolute in defending their religion's position, sometimes regardless of whether it is right or wrong. Worse still, the attack almost inevitably brings negative and hostile responses from the 'adherents' and the possibility of the 'attacker' working in unity with the 'adherent' is almost certainly lost. Since Garvey was an advocate of Afrikan unity in the liberation struggle for national self-government, he emphasised the futility of such attacks. He explained:

"Man's religion is something that we cannot eliminate from his system or destroy in him, therefore it is folly for any man to go about attacking another man's religion, because to him it is fundamental". (Sons of Garvey Press Association, 1990, p. 24).

Garvey understood the problem of potentially alienating Afrikan people who, but for attacks being made against their religion, would make sterling contributions to the Afrikan liberation struggle. He stood for Afrikan unity, not disunity and therefore went all out to discourage UNIA members from attacking the religions of fellow members or non-members. He warned UNIA members that:

"... any man who gets out and attacks religions, thinking he can convert men to the organisation by doing so is not helping the organisation. He is doing more harm than good." (Sons of Garvey Press Association, 1990, p. 24).

Afrikan Christians are historically the natural allies of Garveyism. Those forces that claim to operate from the ideology of Garvey and at the same time attack Christianity create a sad irony, because their actions alienate some of the most powerful mass groupings that Garvey organised with in his time.

4 Christianity: For or against the Afrikan liberation struggle?

4.1 Christianity was used for evil against Afrikan people

The UNIA was critical of those forces that corrupted Christianity in order to use it as a tool to contain and oppose the liberation of Afrikan people. Amy Jacques Garvey reminded us that:

"Afrikans at home, like Afrikans abroad have grown weary and tired of that false brand of Christianity, which teaches humility and subjection to the white usurper and exploiter, who at the same time is demonstrating an aggressiveness and overlordship that is bewildering and disillusioning." (Garvey, 1970, p. 104).

Marcus Garvey condemned the suffering caused by people who camouflage their evil doing behind Christianity. He noted that the 'Christian' British went around the colonies robbing,

exploiting and murdering Afrikan people (Garvey, 1986, p. 44). They were not alone: Portugal, Belgium, Spain, Italy, France and Germany did likewise under the guise of Christianity and humanity (Garvey, 1986, p. 352). His condemnation was not only at the level of nations, he specifically commented on:

"... the selfishness and greed of those who profess Christianity as a religion, but not as a way of life." (Garvey, 1970, p. 324).

It is also clear that his condemnation of those who claim to be Christian, but fail to live up to the principles of Christianity was relentless and uncompromising. For instance, he observed:

"... We profess to live in an atmosphere of Christianity, yet our acts are as barbarous as if we never knew Christ. He taught us to love, yet we hate; to forgive, yet we revenge; to be merciful, yet we condemn and punish, and still we are Christians.

If hell is what we are taught it is, then there will be more Christians there than days in all creation. To be a true Christian, one must be like Christ and practice true Christianity, not as the Bishop does, but as he says, for if our lives were to be patterned after the other fellow's all of us, Bishop, Priest and Layman would ultimately meet around the furnace of hell, and none of us, because of our sins, would see salvation." (Garvey, 1986, p. 27).

Garvey also understood that Christianity had been used by wicked enslavers as a tool to aid the evil and unjust system of enslaving Afrikan people. He realised that Christianity was effectively imposed on Afrikan people during the enslavement era and used to justify enslavement. He explained:

"I am not responsible, neither is any other [Afrikan person], for the accident of birth in the western world, for we are all relics of slavery, an institution that was forced upon our fathers and made justified in the name of Christianity ..." (Garvey, 1986, p. 256).

This did not however cause him to renounce his Christianity, which he confirmed as an adult and re-affirmed in court proceedings. Garvey highlighted the contradiction implicit within the Afrikan Diasporan experience of Christianity: on the one hand, there was the fact that it had been imposed by the European imperialist enslavers; on the other, it provided an infrastructure for a level of Afrikan unity and organisation. Garvey explained how the emotional tie of religion was a bonding force for Afrikan people in the Diaspora and how that bond was abused by those who controlled it:

"The only cause that held us together as a people was RELIGION. During the days of slavery religion was the only consolation for the [Afrikan], and then it was given to him by his masters.

Immediately after the emancipation, when the [Afrikan] was thrown back on his own resources, the illiterate race preacher took charge of us, and with the eye of selfishness he exploited the zeal of the religious." (Garvey, 1986, p. 98).

Garvey clearly understood that it was not only the European imperialists that misused religion by employing it as a tool to practice evil. Amy Jacques Garvey explains how the UNIA came under attack from unscrupulous Afrikan preachers that aligned themselves with the imperialist enemy. The preachers operated against the best interests of Afrikan people for their own selfish reasons. She explained:

"Many preachers felt that the UNIA was depleting their membership and in revenge they informed their local police and political bosses that Garvey preached hate. On a tour of the South, he arrived in New Orleans to be met by a despondent looking delegation, who told him that [an Afrikan] preacher had caused the police lieutenant to order that 'Garvey must not speak in town.'" (Garvey, 1970, p. 97).

Garvey's struggle with those that controlled Christianity had a number of different but related fronts: firstly, there was the direct battle with the European imperialists who imposed Christianity on Afrikan people as a means of control; secondly, there was the internal battle with some Afrikan preachers who supported the European imperialists as agents of control; and; thirdly, there was the battle to reclaim the minds of the innocent Afrikan victims of the indoctrination which resulted from the misuse of Christianity by the European imperialists and their Afrikan agents.

4.2 Religion as a tool in the liberation struggle

There is sometimes a tendency to view a relationship between Christianity and Afrikan people as inevitably bad. The ferocious use of Christianity as a vehicle of oppression by European imperialism has caused some Afrikan people to adopt the position that Christianity is inevitably bad for Afrikan people. This was however, not the position adopted by Marcus Garvey, who believed that it was possible to work with Afrikan controlled Christian organisations in the quest for Afrikan freedom. In fact, he actively engaged with Christians and Christian churches in the struggle to achieve Afrikan liberation and an Afrikan national government.

Garvey's strategic approach arose partly because he appears not to have viewed religion as an end in itself; instead it was a means to an end. At the immaterial level religion was a means to be utilised to assist its adherents to connect with God; in that sense, it was a spiritual tool. However, at the material level religious organisation could be employed as a means for helping its adherents to actively solve their own human problems on earth; for

Afrikan people this obviously meant solving the Afrikan liberation problem, by organising to reclaim their homeland.

The UNIA recognised therefore, that on earth religion can be and is used as a liberation tool (Latif, 1994, p. 343). Like any tool, it can be used for good or for evil. For instance, a knife can be used to prepare food to help preserve lives. Alternatively, it can be used to kill and destroy lives. The fundamental determining factor is the motivation of the person holding the knife, not the knife itself. This is also true for religion; the fundamental determining factor is the people controlling the religion, not the religion itself.

The interpretation of Garvey's belief that Afrikan people's chosen religion can actively contribute to Afrikan liberation and should be utilised rather than attacked, is supported by a leading scholar on the life and works of Marcus Garvey. Tony Martin argues that Garvey:

" ... seems to have preferred to use the idea of religion while skilfully reinterpreting it for use as an agent of liberation ... faced with the choice of making a full frontal assault against religion on the one hand, and co-opting it for the struggle for nationhood on the other, he preferred the latter." (Clarke, 1974, p. 429).

In developing a strategy for working with religious groups Garvey appears to have been less concerned with the detailed ideological content of the various religions, and more concerned with utilising their organisational form for Afrikan liberation. Religious groupings provided some of the best examples of organised Afrikan formations in the community. The UNIA recognised that the more organised Afrikan formations (whether religious or not) there were united in fighting for Afrikan liberation, the more the power of the Afrikan liberation movement would increase exponentially.

4.3 Christianity could be used constructively by Afrikan people

Garvey was an Afrikan who, as a result of the European imperialist enslavement of Afrikan people, was born in the Caribbean island of Jamaica. He would almost certainly have been aware of the native Afrikan heroes Sam Sharpe (Hart, 1985, p. 244-271) and Paul Bogle (Black, 1983, p. 131-4). Both Sharpe and Bogle were Christian preachers that had led massive Afrikan uprisings against slavery and colonialism on the island of Jamaica. Their courageous actions provided some of the best examples of resistance to the European imperialist exploiters by Afrikan people who were Christians. These parts of Jamaican history would, almost certainly, have helped Garvey to understand the capacity of Christians organised under Christianity, to galvanise their collective energies in order to use those energies for Afrikan liberation.

This may explain why Garvey differed from those forces that argue that 'Christianity is European culture' and controls the mind to such an extent that anybody who practices it, regardless of their ethnicity, is forever condemned to behave as a European. His disagreement with this position operated at different levels. For instance, on one level he argued that:

"No two persons think alike, even if they outwardly profess the same faith ..." (Garvey, 1986, p. 3).

Amy Jacques Garvey explained that, on another level, it was possible for the European oppressor's imposed religion to be taken by Afrikan people, transformed for use as a liberation tool, and then put to use against the same European oppressor. She informed us that Garveyism recognised how different:

"... races interpret even the Christian religion to suit themselves and practice it according to their own lights." (Garvey, 1970, p. 157).

In other words, conscious non-Europeans have the capacity to interpret Christianity in a way that is beneficial to their people's progress. In fact Marcus Garvey is an example of an Afrikan person who was born into Christianity (Huntley, 1988, p. 5), swore on oath in adulthood that he was still a Christian (Garvey, 1986, p. 252) and whilst never ever renouncing Christianity, displayed a sterling level of commitment to the Afrikan liberation struggle.

Garvey gave encouragement to those that used their Christianity to help advance the liberation of Afrikan people. He deployed the tactic of organising *through* Afrikan churches rather than *against* Afrikan churches. In the early days, when the UNIA was based in Jamaica, Garvey lectured on the conditions of Afrika. He received support for this from a Catholic Bishop and a Presbyterian minister; the minister also provided Collegiate Hall as a venue for the lectures (Clarke, 1974, p. 36).

Another example of co-operation with Christians comes in the form of a 'Big Mass Meeting' organised by Rev. RH Singleton of the AME church on 25th March 1917. So enthusiastic was the Reverend that he informed his congregation that:

"It is worth travelling 1000 miles to hear [Garvey speak]." (Garvey, 1970, p. 314).

Yet another example of the UNIA's organisational work with churches came when Garvey publicly identified a number of members who had greatly helped the development of the organisation. He named:

"... John E. Bruce ... Dr. R. R. Wright, Jr., Dr. Parks, vice-president of the Baptist Union, and Dr. Triley of the M. E. Church of Philadelphia, The Rev. J. C. Anderson of Quinn Chapel and Mrs. Ida Wells Barnett of Chicago." (Clarke, 1974, p. 90).

The fact that he mentioned church leaders amongst these members is an indication of the role that these Christian ministers and their congregations were playing in propagating the ideas of the UNIA and building the organisation.

The Afrikan Orthodox Church also played an important role in building and expanding the membership of the UNIA. The leader of the church in South Afrika, Archbishop Alexander visited several countries in Afrika including Uganda and Kenya ordaining new ministers of the Church as he went (Lewis, 1994, p. 108). These church groups proliferated quickly and played a great part in spreading the ideas of Garveyism across Afrika (Clarke, 1974, p. 340).

During the late 1910's and early 1920's, the membership of the UNIA rose from a few thousand to several million people. It is irrefutable that Churches, Mosques and other religious organisations and establishments had a considerable part to play in rapidly increasing the membership. It therefore seems reasonable to conclude that Garvey's tactic of working with all religious groupings that were willing to work with him paid great dividends for the UNIA.

5 The reconfiguring of Christianity to support Afrikan liberation

5.1 Garvey saw God as an Afrikan

In order to make his interactions with the congregations of Christian churches meaningful and productive for the Afrikan liberation process, Garvey saw the need to redirect and re-orientate the thinking of Afrikan Christians. Changes in their thinking needed to take place so that they could effectively be galvanised into action for their own development and advancement. Garvey came to regard it as vital that Afrikan people see God in their own image (Garvey, 1986, p. 44). As part of a programme aimed at directing Christian believers to actively contribute to the struggle for Afrikan liberation, Garvey sought to reconfigure aspects of the form of Christianity. He reminded Afrikan people that:

"God tells us to worship him in our own image. We are black and to be in our own image, God must be black." (Garvey, 1970, p. 141).

Garvey also felt that it was vital that the cardinal images of Christianity be portrayed in Afrikan form. He attempted to persuade Afrikan Christians to:

"... visualise Christ – the redeemer of all mankind as a man of colour ... [and] ... The Virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, [as being] of dark complexion. (Garvey, 1970, p. 323).

In addition, he cemented the idea of an Afrikan centred approach to Christianity by ensuring that the UNIA had its own dedicated Afrikan Archbishop. In September 1921 Reverend Alexander McGuire, previously a minister of the Episcopal church was ordained and appointed to the position of 'Chaplin General of the UNIA and Titular Archbishop of Ethiopia' (Hart, 2002, p. 73). He was also referred to as: 'His Grace the Archbishop and Primate of the African Orthodox Church'. (Garvey, 1986, p. 285). Afrikan Christians who were not 'in church' were advised to attend the Afrikan Orthodox Church and those that were 'in church' were asked to bear that option in mind. (Garvey, 1970, p. 141).

Another significant milestone in the process of reconfiguring Christianity to represent Afrikan imagery through its most treasured icons came on 3rd August 1924 during the 4th UNIA Convention when Garvey and the UNIA unveiled a statue of the Black Madonna. (UNIA Timeline).

5.2 Garvey favoured a practical response to achieving Afrikan liberation

Garvey was not an advocate of the idea that we should limit ourselves to appealing to God to grant us our freedom. He understood that as human beings with free will and consciences, we are individually and collectively obliged to carry out all of the actions necessary to liberate ourselves. As a result, Garvey preached self-reliance not God-reliance; He preached self-determination, not God-determination. It is clear that he felt that God had left the physical or material aspects of living for human beings to sort out for themselves. This meant that Garvey favoured a practical response to solving Afrikan people's problems here on earth. It follows that Garvey was not:

"... one of those Christians who believe that the bible can solve all of the problems of humanity" (Garvey, 1986, p. 7).

He took the view that:

"... whilst we are hoping by our Christian virtues to have an entry into paradise we also realise that we are living on earth, and that the things that are practiced in paradise are not practiced here. You have to treat the world as the world treats you; we are living in a temporal material age, an age of activity, an age of racial, national selfishness. What else can you expect but to give back to the world what the world gives to you ..." (Garvey, 1986, p. 76).

Garvey did not therefore believe in the 'pie in the sky' approach to Christianity. He did not accept the idea that Afrikan people should willingly suffer here on earth on the promise of spiritual liberation in heaven after they died. It was simply not acceptable that Afrikan people should suffer oppression here on earth at all. Like all other peoples in the world, Afrikan people had the right to be free. Afrikan people had to organise on the basis of race, with a view to achieving sovereign nationhood. With that in mind, he reminded Afrikan people that:

"... God had nothing to do with the campaign of Italy in Abyssinia, for on the one side we had the Pope of the Catholic Church blessing the crusade, and on the other, the Coptic Church fasting and praying with confidence of victory ... the Italians triumphed by the use of mustard gas. It is logical therefore that God did not take sides, but left the matter to be settled by the strongest human battalion." (Clarke, 1974, p. 337).

Garvey was observing that science won the battle, not God, not any particular religion and not any particular religious denomination. It was therefore no use remaining idle or unscientific if we were serious about Afrikan liberation and the achievement of Afrikan nationhood. Events had shown that prayer, fasting and meditation, unsupported by practical action, could not solve our problems. Garvey cautioned Afrikan people that:

"We are not going to get it [freedom] by worrying God about it, because HE is not a political agent of anybody ... God has given you the character to get anything you want without playing God ..."
(Clarke, 1974, p. 249) [and in any event] "... the power that holds Afrika is not divine" (Garvey, 1986, p. 7).

He took the position that it was human beings that were the creators of the oppressive socio-economic and political problems here on earth and since the oppressor's power was created by humans, it could be overthrown by humans. He therefore sought ways and means of transforming Afrikan people's attitudes so that they would engage in the actions necessary to achieve their liberation here on earth. For instance, in relation to Afrikan people that were Christians, he stated that he had:

"... selected the job to save the body as the soul, and if God didn't intend that, he never would have made man with a body." (Clarke, 1974, p. 430).

This idea of liberating Afrikan people's physical beings as well as their spirits in the afterlife is endorsed by the UNIA's stated position that Afrikan people needed cadres to create:

"... a substantial transformation in [Afrikan people's] souls, and their bodies too ..." (Garvey, 1970, p. 104).

Because he refuted the God-determined approach to life and Afrikan liberation, some observers may regard Garvey's approach to Christianity as unorthodox – but he was nonetheless a Christian. It is however, his self-reliant and self-determined approach to solving human problems, particularly the Afrikan liberation problem, that caused Garvey to encourage other Christians to:

"Make [their] interpretation of Christianity scientific ... and blame not God ..." (Garvey, 1986, p. 33).

The mastery of scientific methodology required that Afrikan people be moved from inaction on the liberation front to action, from employing prayer and meditation only to utilising prayer and meditation supported by scientifically organised collective action for liberation. Therefore, although he was a Christian, Garvey was leading Afrikan people, including fellow Christians into the scientific age. He was not asking them to leave or renounce their Christianity, but rather to re-orientate their Christianity for the advancement of their own people. As part of Garvey's strategy for encouraging Afrikan people to organise themselves for Afrikan liberation and with it, true self-determination through nationhood, he warned them that:

"The battles of the future, whether they be physical or mental, will be fought on scientific lines, and the race that is able to produce the highest scientific development, is the race that will ultimately rule." (Garvey, 1986, p. 14).

Garvey was moving Afrikan people in the direction of developing a scientific understanding of reality. Whilst he favoured a practical approach to achieving Afrikan liberation, he did not dismiss the valuable role of religious organisation in that process. For him, the earthly purpose of religion was to support that practical approach to Afrikan liberation, which is why he organised through the churches and not against the churches. Ultimately, it was not the bible, Christianity, religion or even God that was going to solve the problems of Afrikan people. For Garvey, Afrikan people's problems were man made not God made and for that reason he regarded it as fantasy to expect God to solve them. The obligation was and is on Afrikan people to develop the highest level of scientific achievement so that they are best equipped to solve their problems for themselves in this life. The most important and urgent of these problems is the Afrikan liberation problem.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Garvey, God and Christianity

Garvey believed in God. He was a Christian. He was leader of the UNIA - an Afrikan organisation working for the liberation of Afrika and her people. In terms of their religious make up, the UNIA was predominantly a Christian & Moslem organisation, but Garvey incorporated a broad range of different Afrikan religious believers into the UNIA. In fact, he

actively promoted religious tolerance and was in principle and practice opposed to the attacking of other people's religions. This is a position that he came to through experiencing the struggles between different categories of religious believers in the UNIA. These struggles made it clear that it would not be possible to unite Afrikan people worldwide on the basis of religion. Garvey felt that the only basis for uniting the UNIA and Afrikan people worldwide was going to be 'race'.

6.2 Garvey reconfigured Christianity

Garvey saw religion as a tool which could be used both for and against Afrikan liberation. He recognised that some forces use Christianity to oppose Afrikan Liberation and he condemned those forces without reservation. He also recognised that Afrikan people could use Christianity to help advance the Afrikan liberation struggle. His tactic was to ensure that Christianity was utilised for this constructive purpose, rather than for the maintenance of imperialism. He therefore, organised through the Churches working with congregations and preachers that were willing to work with him.

His strategy was to reconfigure Christianity so that its Afrikan adherents would be more focused on the agenda of Afrikan Liberation. He advised Afrikan Christians to recognise God, Mary, Jesus and the angels as being Afrikan (i.e. in their own image). He created the Afrikan Orthodox Church and appointed an Afrikan Primate to head it. However, his most important contribution in reconfiguring the Christian church was to advise Afrikan Christians that they must engage in practically solving their own problems if they seriously wanted to be liberated.

6.3 Garvey sought to solve Afrikan people's problems on earth

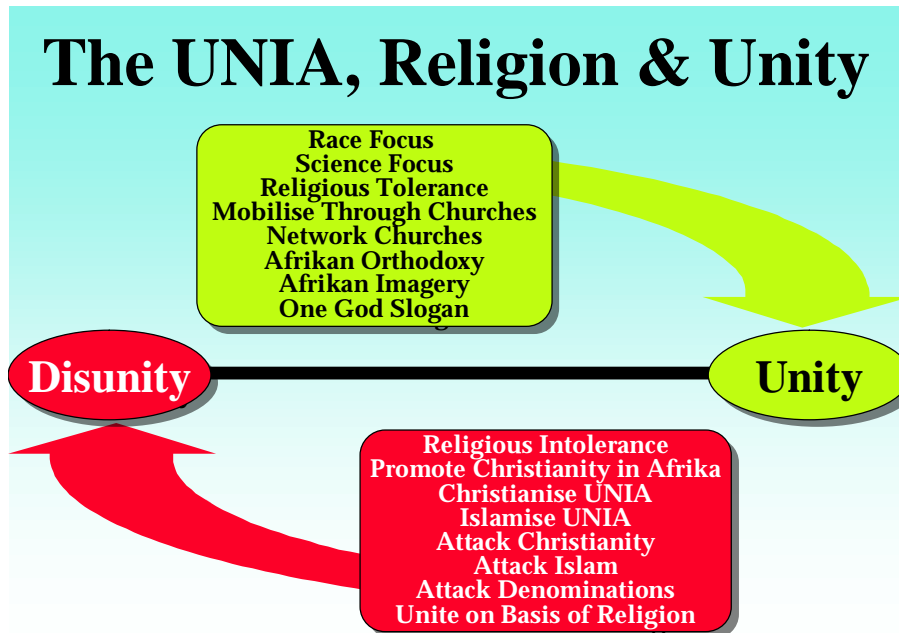
Garvey cautioned against the 'pie in the sky' approach to religion, making clear his view that the Bible could not solve all of the problems of Afrikan people. He recognised that Afrikan people's problems of subjugation and oppression were man made, not God made. This meant that God was not going to solve these problems on Afrikan people's behalf. Moreover, it was Afrikan people that had to solve these problems; organised collective self-help was the key to Afrikan liberation. He made it clear that what humans have done, humans can also undo. He reminded Afrikan people that mastery of science was the practical way forward to liberation, nationhood, permanent self-determination and prosperity. The ultimate rulers of the world would be the 'race' that best mastered science; in the end, religion by itself would not solve Afrikan people's problems.

6.4 The UNIA's approach to utilising religious practices for the achievement of unity

Marcus Garvey understood that the achievement of unity within the UNIA was a vital objective, because unity would contribute substantially towards making the UNIA a more effective organisation. Furthermore, a more unified and effective UNIA would put the organisation in a position to make a more profound contribution towards the achievement of

Afrikan liberation and a sovereign continental wide Afrikan nation-state. Against this background, one of the methods for extracting the lessons to be learnt from the UNIA's experiences with religions and various religious groups, is to examine how the concepts and practices of the differing religions contributed to the dynamics of unity and disunity in the UNIA.

The UNIA was a very practical organisation that learnt from its experiences. It learnt that when it tried to promote Christianity amongst Afrikan people at home, it alienated Afrikan Moslems together with those that engaged in traditional Afrikan spiritual practices and this contributed to an environment of disunity. In 1922 an attempt to turn the UNIA into an official Moslem organisation failed, triggering bouts of disunity by upsetting non-Moslems. Similarly in 1924, a failed attempt to turn the UNIA into an official Christian organisation alienated UNIA members who were not Christians and again contributed to an atmosphere of disunity. Attempts to unite the organisation on the basis of Christianity and Islam ended in complete failure.



Brother Omowale

During these periods of intense religious struggles a range of behaviours exhibited by UNIA members further entrenched the atmosphere that promoted disunity. When Afrikan Christians attacked Islam, Afrikan Moslems were offended and it led to disunity. When Afrikan Moslems attacked Christianity, Afrikan Christians were offended and it led to disunity. When Afrikan Christians of different Christian denominations attacked each other it led to disunity. Under these conditions, religion proved to be a force for spreading division amongst UNIA members and the broader Afrikan community. If religious beliefs were not handled tactfully, delicately and intelligently, it could lead to the destruction of Afrikan unity and contribute to a major setback for Afrikan liberation. Realising that unity on the basis of religion was impossible

Garvey informed the organisation that they must unite on the basis of 'race'. Christians for instance, should see God through Afrikan eyes and Afrikan imagery.

The UNIA tackled these very serious trends of division and disunity by: promoting spirituality instead of Christianity in Afrika, so as not to contest the particular religious practices already present in their respective parts of the continent; actively promoting religious tolerance together with the freedom to worship or not worship amongst its membership; creating the Afrikan Orthodox Church as a mechanism for uniting Afrikan Christians – both Catholics and Protestants and; mobilising and organising through the individual churches that had so captured the imaginations of Afrikan people and then networking those churches. To counter the destructive bickering over whose God was best, the UNIA developed the unifying slogan: One God! One Aim! One Destiny!

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The Pan Afrikan People's Phone-in
Every Sunday 10pm – 12midnight

PAPP Galaxy Radio PAPP

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Phone Number (for on air discussion): 07908 117 619

The Pan-Afrikan People's Phone-in is a space for themed interactive discussions conducted over the airwaves and cyberspace. The themes are focused around issues affecting Afrikan people both locally and globally.

The Pan-Afrikan People's Phone-in regularly features guests from revolutionary Pan-Afrikanist organisations. From time to time others including non-Afrikan guests will be invited to contribute. The activities of all guests will be examined on the basis of their relevance to Afrikan people locally and worldwide. Interviews and presentations with guests will set the scene for the more general discussion (in the second half of the programme) where listeners will be invited to phone in, ask questions and contribute.

Spread the word: Please tell all of your family, friends, fellow organisation members, colleagues, associates and other networks about the show. Encourage them to listen.

Marcus Garvey was a Christian

Background

This paper comes about as a direct result of the 2007 series of Marcus Garvey Afrikan Family Day (MGAFD) workshops. It addresses an issue raised in the 6th workshop in the series entitled *Garvey's ideas and actions on religious practice in the liberation struggle* held on 28th August 2007. During the workshop, there appeared to be a dispute as to whether or not Garvey was a Christian. At the end of the meeting, an opportunity to explain clearly, to those gathered, why it is obvious that Garvey was a Christian was denied. This paper therefore sets out that explanation, so that those who were in attendance, or any other interested party can assess the evidence for themselves.

Objective

The objectives of this document are:

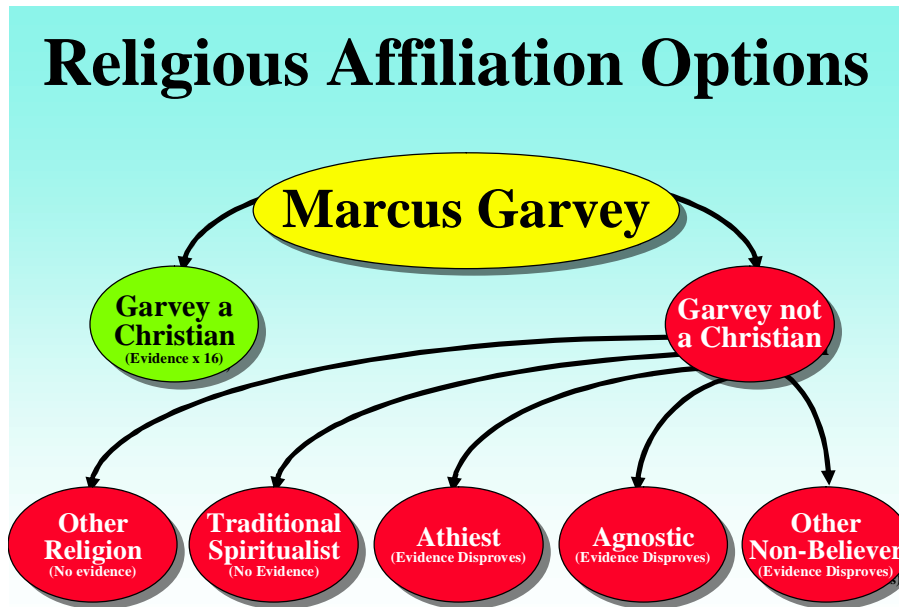
- To prove that Marcus Garvey was a Christian:
 - To demonstrate that Marcus Garvey was not anti-Christian;
 - To assert that true followers of the ideology of Marcus Garvey cannot be anti-Christian;
- To demonstrate through the example of Marcus Garvey that:
 - Being a Christian does not automatically mean that Afrikan people will be adverse to Afrikan liberation;
 - Afrikan people can be Christian and simultaneously supportive of the Afrikan liberation process;
 - It is not a requirement that Afrikan people worship through the Traditional Afrikan Spiritual mode in order to effectively contribute to the Afrikan liberation struggle.

The parameters of the discussion

This document sets out a body of evidence supporting the hypothesis that Marcus Garvey was a Christian. It does not attempt to deal with arguments surrounding how intense Garvey's Christianity was; how committed he was to Christianity; how good a Christian he was; or the extent to which he formally practiced his Christian faith. Its focus is precisely on proving that Garvey was a Christian.

A framework for a scientific inquiry designed to establish whether Marcus Garvey had an affinity to Christianity can be expressed via a simple equation - either Garvey was a Christian (the null hypothesis) or he was not (the alternative hypothesis). If Garvey was a Christian, then based on the evidence presented in this document the argument ends there.

However, if Garvey was not a Christian then this would raise the question of which other religion, if any, he observed. It would also require the production of evidence to show that he was of some other religious, spiritual or non-believing persuasion. Production of this calibre of evidence would be a formidable positive challenge to the supposition that Marcus Garvey was a Christian. In fact this would be the highest level of challenge possible because it would actively propose a 'credible' alternative to the hypothesis that Marcus Garvey was a Christian.



Brother Omowale

By expanding on the null and alternative hypotheses as a frame of reference it is possible to produce an exhaustive list of possibilities. It is possible to reason that Marcus Garvey, in relation to religious practices, must have been one of the following:

- A Christian;
- A follower of a religion other than Christianity (i.e. Islam, Rasta, Hindu etc.);
- A Spiritualist (distinct from any religious body);
- An Atheist;
- An Agnostic;
- Another category of non-believer.

As will be seen, Garvey's own words prove that he was a believer in God. This fact dismisses the last three categories identified above. On top of that, there appears to be no record of Garvey saying that he was a spiritualist or a follower of any religion other than Christianity. Furthermore, since Marcus Garvey told us that he was a Christian, the failure to produce evidence to support any of the other possibilities above is another level of proof that he could only have been a Christian.

In the alternative, if there were any doubts surrounding Garvey's standing as a Christian, we could reasonably expect his enemies to publicly make damaging pronouncements that he was a 'heathen'. Worse still they could attack him on the grounds that he was a 'heathen', faking that he was a Christian. However, neither Garvey's friends nor his foes argued, at the time, that he was not a Christian. Whilst we can find evidence that Garvey did come under attack from some Christian ministers (Garvey, 1970, p. 97), the evidence indicates that they felt threatened by the possibility that he would take away their congregations. Their fears were so strong that some of these ministers went so far as to collude with their local police forces to undermine Garvey's drive for Afrikan unity.

Despite this level of open hostility, there is no evidence of these myopic Christian ministers, or anyone else, attacking Garvey on the grounds that he was not a Christian. Nor is there evidence of them attacking him on the grounds that he was pretending to be Christian i.e. knowingly tricking congregations into believing that was a Christian when really he was not. The apparent non-existence of documentation containing these kinds of attack, against the background of sustained wide ranging acrimonious attacks against Garvey, strongly implies that Marcus Garvey was accepted as a Christian even by his enemies.

It is reasonable to conclude that our best witnesses must be those people that were there at the time. Firstly Garvey; secondly people who worked directly with Garvey and; thirdly other people living in that era. The evidence of people who were not there at the time must generally be regarded as inferior. Since the people alive at the time do not appear to have left testimony or documentation claiming that Marcus Garvey was not a Christian, the credibility of this claim, now being made by people who were not alive at the relevant time must be called into question.

If the observations above are not correct, then the onus is on those who believe that Garvey was something other than a Christian to produce the evidence which supports one of the alternative notions of what he was. Advocates of any of these lines of argument are obliged to produce factual evidence confirming that he either did not believe in God or that he had an alternative belief system.

The main problem confronting these lines of argument is the absence of relevant facts to help substantiate any of these suppositions. The absence of facts is a massive problem because relevant facts bring us closer to really understanding what happened in history and how events really unfolded. Relevant facts are crucial to clarifying reality even though they cannot by themselves give a fully accurate picture of reality and the history that led to present reality. Fundamentally, relevant facts are a precondition for an honest and accurate interrogation of history.

In short, history without facts is not history – it is reduced to mythology or fantasy and as such, it can never be history. In other words, the failure to produce facts which demonstrate that Garvey was something other than a Christian takes this claim out of the realm of history and places it firmly in the realm of mythology and fantasy. It leaves the supposition that Garvey was not a Christian baseless and therefore completely lacking in credibility. If on the other hand, relevant facts are produced their exposure brings us to the beginnings of a real debate on the issue of Marcus Garvey's religious persuasion.

Whilst no relevant facts have yet been produced to counter the evidence supporting the case for Garvey being a Christian, attempts have been made to deflect the emphasis of the debate away from Garvey's Christian belief by emphasising: (i) his criticisms of Christianity; (ii) his call for Afrikan controlled institutions – including churches and; (iii) his opposition to the imposition of European images of God on to Afrikan people. These lines of argument do not take the discussion forward since the mere highlighting of Marcus Garvey's criticisms of Christianity falls significantly short of proving that he was not a Christian. It is obvious that many Christians criticise Christianity whilst remaining faithful Christians.

Similarly, the fact that Garvey called for Afrikan controlled institutions – including churches does not mean that he was not a Christian. The history is unambiguous on this point since Garvey set up the Afrikan Orthodox Church which was a Christian church aimed at Afrikan people and controlled by Afrikan people. Therefore in real life, he built an Afrikan controlled Christian institution, which is completely consistent with Garvey being a Christian.

Furthermore, the production of evidence that Marcus Garvey was opposed to the imposition of European images of God on to Afrikan people does not mean that he was not a Christian. There are many Afrikan Christians, including members of the Afrikan Orthodox and Ethiopian Orthodox churches, who express similar opposition to European Christian imagery whilst, at the same time, remaining loyal Christians.

The truth is that none of these lines of argument are relevant to the issue of whether Marcus Garvey was or was not a Christian. In essence, they represent subjective attempts to separate Garvey from the evidence of his stated Christian belief. These lines of argument are misleading because despite the fact that he had plenty of opportunity to do so, Garvey never separated himself from Christianity; he never said that he was not a Christian or that he was opposed to Christianity. On the contrary, Garvey openly stated that he was a Christian and developed close working ties with fellow Christians and other religious groups in the process of building the UNIA.

In the absence of a credible alternative to the notion that Marcus Garvey was a Christian, there still remain lower level arguments. These arguments are negative arguments in the

sense that they go no further than analysing and criticising the facts of the null hypothesis. Negative arguments in this sense do not mean that they are bad arguments, nor does it mean that they are invalid. Instead it means that they are limited to confronting or challenging the facts presented rather than offering an alternative hypothesis. These criticisms or challenges can be mounted on the grounds that:

- One, some or all of the facts presented are incorrect;
- The facts presented are correct, but the interpretation of one, some or all of those facts is incorrect;
- The facts presented are correct, but the uses to which one, some or all of the facts have been put are incorrect;
- Relevant facts which contradict the facts presented are not included.

The reason why the arguments contained in the first three categories above are lower level arguments is that by themselves they cannot tell us what Garvey's religious persuasion was. This inadequacy means that they are moot arguments with the likelihood that they are also abstract arguments. If successfully argued they can at best challenge the supposition that Garvey was a Christian. They fail to link Garvey to an alternative belief mode and therefore fall short of demonstrating what he actually was if he was not a Christian.

In the alternative, if there were any doubts surrounding Garvey's standing as a Christian, we could reasonably expect his enemies to publicly make damaging pronouncements that he was a 'heathen'. Worse still they could attack him on the grounds that he was a 'heathen', faking that he was a Christian. However, neither Garvey's friends nor his foes argued, at the time, that he was not a Christian. Whilst we can find evidence that Garvey did come under attack from some Christian ministers (Garvey, 1970, p. 97), the evidence indicates that they felt threatened by the possibility that he would take away their congregations. Their fears were so strong that some of these ministers went so far as to collude with their local police forces to undermine Garvey's drive for Afrikan unity.

Despite this level of open hostility, there is no evidence of these myopic Christian ministers, or anyone else, attacking Garvey on the grounds that he was not a Christian. Nor is there evidence of them attacking him on the grounds that he was pretending to be Christian i.e. knowingly tricking congregations into believing that was a Christian when really he was not. The apparent non-existence of documentation containing these kinds of attack, against the background of sustained wide ranging acrimonious attacks against Garvey, strongly implies that Marcus Garvey was accepted as a Christian even by his enemies.

It is reasonable to conclude that our best witnesses must be those people that were there at the time. Firstly Garvey; secondly people who worked directly with Garvey and; thirdly other

people living in that era. The evidence of people who were not there at the time must generally be regarded as inferior. Since the people alive at the time do not appear to have left testimony or documentation claiming that Marcus Garvey was not a Christian, the credibility of this claim, now being made by people who were not alive at the relevant time must be called into question.

The evidence supporting the fact that Marcus Garvey was a Christian is formidable. It presents significant difficulties for anybody attempting to argue that he was not a Christian. Whilst it may be possible to mount a challenge against some of the individual pieces of the evidence taken in isolation, it is difficult verging on impossible to present a coherent case which convincingly challenges all of the pieces of evidence combined. Furthermore, the evidence is strong enough to prove beyond reasonable doubt that Garvey, at particular points in his life, was undoubtedly a Christian. The evidence clearly illustrates that during the heyday of the UNIA, Garvey was a Christian. If there is a question mark on the issue of Garvey's Christianity, it could only be at the level of questioning whether or not Garvey was a Christian at all points in his life.

Evidence that Garvey was a Christian

Marcus Garvey spoke publicly as a Christian

It is possible to identify a small number of core Christian beliefs which speak to the essence of Christian faiths. For instance, if we look at the Christian calendar, Christmas and Easter mark the 2 most important points in the year. Christmas symbolises the birth of Christ and within that the essential Christian tenants of *the Virgin Birth* and *the Immaculate Conception*.

For many branches of Christianity these beliefs are 'evidence' that *Jesus the Christ* was *the Son of God*. Jesus the Christ is also perceived as part of *the Holy trinity*, the 3 in 1 entity of God the father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. *Jesus the Christ*, as part of the 3 in 1 entity is seen as *God in human flesh*.

Easter symbolises the death and *the resurrection* of Jesus the Christ – the overcoming of death. For Christians, this is the 'evidence' that God, through 'his' son (Gods' physical manifestation on earth) conquered death and through this act gave the gift of *everlasting life* to his believers. Even though there are many different denominations with different approaches to Christianity, their differences are mainly differences in emphasis. They all employ some permutation of the articles of the Christian faith identified above.

It is clear that Garvey spoke publicly as a Christian. There are many examples which demonstrate that in his presentations, he frequently made reference to all of the articles of

Christian faith mentioned above. For instance, in his 1922 Christmas speech he told his audience:

"... the Trinity caused the Son of God to vouchsafe himself as the redeemer of mankind, as the redeemer of the world. He betook to himself, with the authority of His Father, the duty, the work, the labor, the sacrifice, to bring man nearer to his creator, to bring man back to his God.

The angels on that first Christmas morn notified the world that the Christ was to be born. He did not of himself come down in his spiritual image from the heaven on high, but for the purpose of drawing himself nearer man He took on the flesh and was born of a virgin woman ..." (Garvey, 1986, p. 27).

Garvey reiterated some of these observations in his 1922 Easter speech when, in exclusively Christian language, he reminded his audience of Afrikan people about:

"... the God we love, the God we adore, the God who sent His Son to this world nearly two thousand years ago ..." (Garvey, 1986, p. 89).

Garvey also extolled the Christian concept of Christ the saviour. He said that:

"... Christ came to save all mankind from the fallen state, to restore man to his spiritual kinship with his God ..." (Garvey, 1986, p. 32).

This is a point which Garvey had made even more emphatically pronounced Christian language in his 1921 Christmas speech. In words that can only be religiously categorised as Christian he elucidated the Christian concept the Christ overcoming death to facilitate of life ever lasting:

"Yet even with the great object of the cross before us, even though He died on Mount Calvary to make us free; even though he overcame death, the grave and hell to demonstrate to us the new life possible for each and every one, we have not yet turned from the life of sin to enter into the glory of his eternal kingdom ... when that which was physical in the Christ died, the spiritual continued, and from earth betook its flight to heaven, there, probably for all eternity ..." (Garvey, 1986, p. 84).

Milestones in the life of Marcus Garvey

Garvey's classic phrase: 'One God! One aim! One destiny!' stands as testimony to the importance that he attached to the Supreme Being (Garvey, 1986, p. 38 & 415). It is clear that Garvey believed in God and he appears to have been a Christian all his life. His mother and father were both Christians of the Methodist denomination (Huntley, 1988, p. 5; Garvey,

1986, p. 124). Marcus later converted to Catholicism and was married to his first wife Amy Ashwood Garvey under the rules of Catholicism:

"After their long courtship, [Amy] Ashwood and Garvey were married in a private Catholic church ceremony, followed by an elaborate public ceremony and reception at Liberty Hall, on Christmas Day, 1919." (American Experience).

The couple had previously advocated the promotion of Christianity when they drew up the original objectives of the UNIA in 1914 (Clarke, 1974, p. 60). However, the fact that they kept the wedding ceremony private whilst having an elaborate public ceremony could be an indicator that the Garvey's subsequently learnt to keep their religious beliefs and practices private. This might go some way towards explaining why there is so little evidence of Marcus Garvey's religious practices today.

Within a few months of the marriage i.e. by 6th March 1920, it had irretrievably broken down (American Experience - Timeline). Marcus Garvey sought an annulment (i.e. a declaration that the marriage was invalid from the very beginning), but the Catholic Church refused his application. Marcus Garvey went ahead and pursued divorce proceedings which he obtained on 15th June 1922 (American Experience - Timeline). Amy Ashwood neither accepted nor acknowledged the divorce (Pan-African News Wire). It appears that her determined attempts to refute it persuaded the British government that the divorce papers were not valid.

Going ahead with the divorce would, almost certainly, have met with the disapproval of the Catholic Church. It would almost certainly have had a detrimental affect on his status as a Catholic, though there is no suggestion that he was 'excommunicated' i.e. thrown out of the Catholic faith. Even if this worse case scenario did happen, it would have prevented him from being a Catholic, but it would not have prevented him from being a Christian. He would still have been free to have exercised his Christianity through another denomination.

At the 1920 UNIA convention Garvey created the salaried post of Chaplin General to the UNIA (Garvey, 1986, p. 279). This initiative formed part of the framework for the establishment of the UNIA's own church. A year later Garvey, working through the UNIA, set up a Christian church – the Afrikan Orthodox Church. This new Christian church came into being following the appointment of Archbishop Alexander McGuire as its head in September 1921 (Garvey, 1970, p. 141; Hart, 2002, p. 73; African Orthodox Church Archives; Marcus Garvey). These actions were completely consistent with: (i) Garvey being a Christian; (ii) Garvey being critical of existing Christian denominations; (iii) Garvey's advocacy of Afrikan controlled religious institutions for Afrikan people and; (iv) Garvey's desire that Afrikan people should see God in our own image.

On 27th July 1922 Garvey married for a second time; this time to Amy Jacques (Garvey, 1970, p. 89). The circumstances of his divorce would have debarred Garvey from having a Catholic wedding, but he still chose to be married by a Christian minister. James Robert Lincoln Diggs was president of the UNIA Baltimore division. He was also the pastor of the Baltimore Trinity Baptist Church. Minister Diggs:

“... presided over the wedding ceremony of Garvey and Amy Jacques, assuming the title of acting Chaplain General of the UNIA.” (Hill, 1983, p. 694; Marcus Garvey and the UNIA Papers).

In 1923, during his speech explaining the aims and objects of the UNIA, Garvey expressed:

“... a desire to be Christian friends with the white race ...” (Garvey, 1986, p. 37)

However, the most potent evidence that he was a Christian came on 5th June 1925 when at the age of 37 (almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through his life) he made written testimony under oath that:

“... the records will show ... that I have always been a Christian and was confirmed by the Catholic Bishop who testified on my behalf.” (Garvey, 1986, p. 252).

The Bishop was sufficiently satisfied with his commitment to Christianity to testify on his behalf.

Yet another example of Garvey's affinity with Christianity came in 1930. Amy Jacques Garvey informed us that:

“On the seventeenth of September 1930, our first son was born ... [Marcus Garvey] inserted an announcement in the newspapers of the birth of Marcus, Junior. He arranged for and attended the Christening at St. Luke's Anglican Church.” (Garvey, 1970, p. 219).

Similarly, in August 1933 St Luke's Anglican Church in Jamaica was the venue for the christening of Amy's and Marcus' youngest son Julius Garvey.

A secondary source suggesting that Garvey was a Christian comes in the form of Reverend Philip Potter, a former secretary of the World Council of Churches. He expressed the opinion that Garvey was a Christian when he reported that:

“On the 31st October 1937 ... I saw and heard Garvey speak in my home island of Dominica ... The fact that Garvey spoke as a Christian and as one whose inspiration came from the prophetic

message of the bible had a powerful effect on me and has remained with me until this day ..."
(Hart, 2002, p. 66).

If the Reverend's observation was correct, then this would suggest that Garvey was still a Christian to within three years of the end of his life.

There seems to have been three people involved in the nursing of Garvey in the latter stages of his fatal illness. These were: Mrs. Youssof from Bechuanaland (now Botswana); Mr. McIntyre from Grenada and Mrs. Whyte his English secretary. Amy Jacques Garvey explained that:

"Mrs. Whyte was an Anglican so she asked her minister to visit him; Mrs. Youssof was a Roman Catholic, and she asked a priest to see him, and [after that] a father Clark came regularly."
(Garvey, 1970, p. 261; Hart, 2002, p. 68).

Mrs. Whyte's actions suggest that Garvey's secretary did not recognise him as a Catholic; that is possibly an indicator that he was not a practicing Catholic, but does not exclude the possibility that he was a practicing Anglican. Whether or not Mrs. Youssof contacted the Catholic priest because Garvey was out of touch with Catholicism, or because he was too ill to make contact himself is not clear.

Furthermore, despite the known visits of the priest, there is no concrete proof that Garvey did or did not receive the seventh and final Catholic sacrament – the 'Last Rights' which would have verified conclusively that he was a Catholic when he passed. Nonetheless the fact that, given the choice, he saw the Anglican minister only once but saw the Catholic priest repeatedly is an indication of his affinity to Catholicism even in the final stages of his life. Whatever the possible permutations between denominations, it is clear that Garvey received some version of Christian ministry at the end of his life and did not refuse it.

Marcus Garvey crossed to meet the ancestors on 10th June 1940. On 14th June 1940:

"Garvey's remains [were] embalmed and interred in lower catacomb No. 322 in St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Kensal Green, London." (UNIA Timeline)

This is conclusive proof that Garvey was accepted into Catholicism prior to his death. Non-Catholics are not accepted into the Catholic cemetery in Kensal Green, London.

The most compelling historical evidence available indicates that Marcus Garvey was a Christian – though over time he seems to have developed connections with a number of different Christian denominations. However, it is not certain that he was an overtly practicing

Christian. He appears to have been a questioning Christian; one whose commitment to Afrikan liberation was not bound by his Christianity. It is also important to note that there is an absence of historical evidence refuting the fact that he was a Christian or confirming that he had some other form of religious practice.

The historical record affirms that: Marcus Garvey spoke as a Christian; he told us that he was a Christian; the Bishop that confirmed him, told us that he was a Christian; his marriages to Amy Ashwood Garvey and Amy Jacques Garvey each told us that he was a Christian; His second wife Amy Jacques Garvey told us that he was visited by an Anglican vicar, before being regularly visited by a Catholic priest in the final phases of his life. All of the best witnesses seem to agree that Marcus Garvey was a Christian.

The credibility of Garvey's statement

The primary evidence in this matter is Garvey's written testimony. The fact that Garvey made his testimony on oath, confirms that he was swearing to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. His testimony should therefore be treated as the honest truth unless there is any evidence to the contrary. Furthermore, the fact that Garvey tells us that he was confirmed by a Catholic Bishop is very important evidence. Confirmation is one of seven sacraments in the Catholic faith, organised along similar lines to the Afrikan systems of **Rites of Passage**. The individual sacraments are: Baptism, Confession, First Communion, Confirmation, Marriage or Ordination and Last Rights.

Confirmation is the fourth sacrament which generally marks the coming of age or the ascendancy of a child into adulthood. Converts to Catholicism or Catholics who have chosen to defer confirmation can be confirmed in at any point in adulthood, meaning that there is no upper age limit for confirmation. However, there is a lower age limit in the sense that confirmation of pre-pubertic children is not encouraged. The sacrament is also preceded by an education programme, so that candidates are aware of the implications of their decision to undergo confirmation.

Confirmation marks the point in the lives of adult Catholics when they make the decision to 'freely' and knowingly accept Catholicism as their chosen religion and method for connecting with God. Garvey's testimony therefore provides concrete evidence that, 'of his own free will' and as an adult, he knowingly chose to be a Christian of the Catholic denomination.

Garvey's testimony appears to be stronger than just his words alone. He tells us that 'the records will show' that he has always been a Christian and was confirmed by a Catholic Bishop. This means that he is alluding to documented evidence, beyond his words of testimony that prove what he is saying to be true. This corroborative evidence leaves little, if

any, room for doubt as to the truth of Garvey's testimony. The credibility of his written words seems quite frankly, to be unquestionable.

In addition, the very fact that the Catholic Bishop that confirmed Garvey as a Christian, was in court to corroborate and publicly re-affirm that Garvey was confirmed a Christian, should of itself end all speculation. There is no reason to suspect that the Bishop would have anything to gain from lying in court on Garvey's behalf. However, as a European 'man of God' defending an Afrikan freedom fighter, he would have everything to lose if he was found to be lying.

Attempted denial of Garvey's Christian belief

The difficulty with arguments that set out to deny the fact that Garvey was a Christian, is that in order to be correct, they must contradict Garvey's own words, written on oath and supported by information that Garvey informed us is on 'the record'. They must also contradict the public testimony of the Bishop who confirmed him a Catholic. Since Garvey and the Bishop are the two best witnesses in the world on the matter of Garvey's confirmation, contradicting them is an uphill struggle. Add to that the fact that Garvey was twice married by ministers of the Christian faith and the arguments attempting to deny the fact that Garvey was a Christian amount to no case at all.

The Kangaroo Court argument is one example of an attempt to deny that Garvey was a Christian. The argument tries to make out that because the court that tried Garvey was biased against him, he tactically adjusted his written statement on being a Christian to give himself the best possible chance of success. The following is a comment from Garvey that may have been misconstrued as providing a basis for the kangaroo court argument:

"... my rivals and enemies tried to use the honourable court and the prospective jurors of Jewish and Catholic origin and faith in prejudice against me, by circulating before and during the trial thousands of printed circulars and letters wickedly and viciously stating that I was a member of the Ku Klux Klan and against all Jews and Catholics; hence they should send me to prison because Catholics and Jews were judges, district attorneys, jurors and policemen." (Garvey, 1986, p. 245/6).

It seems clear that if he was able to produce evidence that he was a Jew or a Catholic, the evidence would remove the base from this cynical propaganda. However, it would be foolhardy of him to deliberately fabricate the idea that he was a Catholic in order to dismiss these rumours, especially when the issue of his religion did not speak to the substance of his case. It would, of course, be unnecessary for him to fabricate the idea of him being a Catholic if he genuinely was one.

The refusal to accept the bare faced fact that Garvey was a Christian leads the discussion into dangerous Cul-de-sacs. The kangaroo court argument is really claiming that Garvey lied in that part of his testimony. It is claiming that Garvey lied under oath and that he somehow manipulated a Catholic Bishop to lie on his behalf. This is, of course a completely ridiculous supposition, but in order to demonstrate just how ridiculous it is, we will pursue this line of reasoning further down its self-generating slippery slope.

The issue of Garvey's Christianity was a very minor part of his overall testimony. If Garvey lied about being a Christian during his testimony, given on oath, then he may have lied during other, more important, parts of his testimony. If he lied during other parts of his testimony, then he may have been lying in other areas of his life. There would be no reason to accept any part of his testimony; indeed there would be no reason to believe anything he said. In fact his whole credibility would become questionable and this would have a knock-on effect on his organisation and the wider Afrikan liberation struggle. The consequences of lying would have been much too great a risk – Garvey was not lying.

Garvey is one of the greats of the Afrikan liberation struggle. History confirms that he was, without a shadow of a doubt, a man of the highest integrity and principles. In addition to just being plain wrong, the kangaroo court argument also turns out to be an indirect attack against one of Afrika's great sons in that it attempts to undermine his credibility. There is no substantiation for such an argument. The facts in this matter are uncomplicated. We know that Garvey was a Christian because he told us that he was.

There are other reasons why we can assert the kangaroo court argument to be ridiculous. We know for instance, that Garvey was not the only great daughter or son of Afrika to be subjected to one of imperialism's kangaroo courts. Assata Shakur (Jones, 1998, p. 379), Winnie Mandela (Benjamin, 1984, p. 96-111), Rosa Parks (Carson, 2000, p. 51-62), Claudia Jones (Busby, 1992, p. 261), Kwame Nkrumah (Nkrumah, 1979, p. 102-4), Robert Sebukwe (Pogrud, 1991, p. 150-4), Steve Biko (Biko, 1978, p. 115-137), George Jackson (Jones, 1998, p. 377-8), Mumia Abu Jamal (Internal Bolshevnik Tendency, 2004, p. 24-30), Sam Sharpe (Hart, 1985, p. 244-271), Paul Bogle (Black, 1983, p. 131-4) and many others have undergone the same pattern of 'legal' injustice; in some cases they were even facing the death penalty. None of them resorted to lying as a defensive tactic, so it is not clear why Marcus Garvey, who was no less great, should be accused of lowering the standard.

Another argument similar to the Kangaroo court argument is the mercenary use of Christianity argument. It is based on the premise that Garvey was not a genuine Christian; that he did not believe in Christianity, but had to pretend to adopt it because it was the currency of the time i.e. nobody would have listened to him had he not pretended to adopt it.

The mercenary argument implicit accepts that Garvey was publicly a Christian even though it may not necessarily set out to do so. However, by presenting Garvey as a trickster who sets out to deliberately mislead Afrikan people into believing that he was a Christian in order to woo them, it challenges Garvey's integrity and in this way operates to undermine his credibility. It is just another method of saying that Garvey was really lying on oath when he said he was a Christian and takes us down the same Cul-de-sacs as the kangaroo court argument.

Furthermore, if Garvey was not a genuine Christian, it is difficult, though not necessarily impossible to explain why it is that he:

- Initially made it an objective of the UNIA to promote 'conscientious Christian worship' in Afrika (Clarke, 1974, p. 60)
- Made the conscious choice to convert from one branch of Christianity to another (Garvey, 1986, p. 252)
- Did not adopt the same mercenary approach to Islam (i.e. pretend to adopt Islam), when the UNIA learned that Islam had the largest number of Afrikan believers in the world (Garvey, 1970, p. 141)

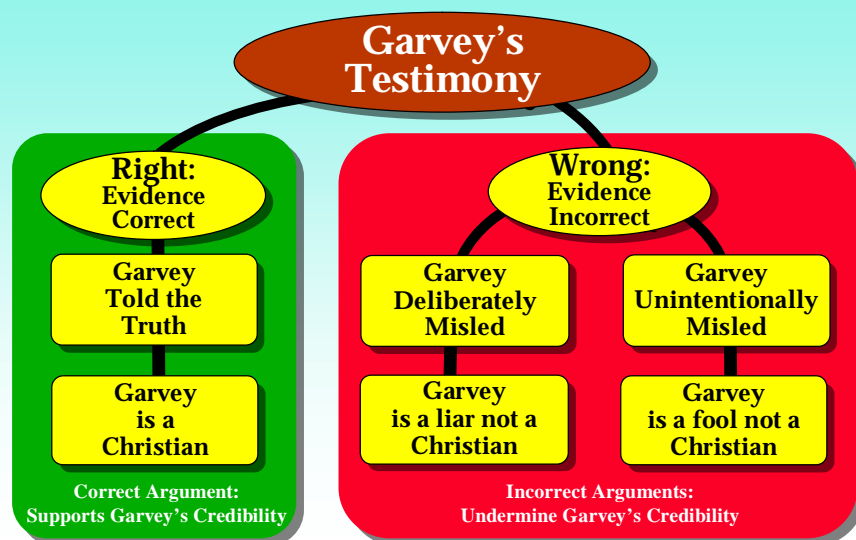
Yet another in this category of arguments is the 'was Garvey *really* a Christian?' argument. This argument accepts that Garvey said that he was a Christian, but suggests that he may not fit an objective definition of what constitutes a Christian. This argument is also implicitly undermining the credibility of Garvey. It actually patronises Garvey by making it appear as though he claimed to be a Christian, but did not know what a *real* Christian was. In other words, that he did not know what he was talking about. In a nutshell, this argument serves to undermine Garvey's credibility by making him appear to be foolish.

Of course, if Garvey was too foolish to know what a *real* Christian was, despite claiming to be one, then he may have been too foolish for the part of his testimony confirming him to be a Christian to be believed. If he was too foolish to be believed in this part of his testimony, then he may have been too foolish to be believed in other parts of his testimony. If Garvey was too foolish to know what a *real* Christian was, then he may have been similarly foolish in other areas of his life. There would be no reason to accept any part of his testimony; indeed there would be no reason to believe anything he said. His whole credibility would become questionable and this would have a knock-on effect on his organisation and the wider Afrikan liberation struggle. This argument amounts to nothing more than another dead end.

Garvey told us that he was a Christian. Either we accept Garvey's testimony that he was a Christian or we do not. If we accept it, the matter ends there – he was a Christian. However, if we do not accept it, then all arguments supporting the notion of non acceptance fall into two categories:

- Firstly, that Garvey deliberately misled the court – which ultimately undermines Garvey’s credibility by portraying him as a liar; and
- Secondly, that Garvey unintentionally misled the court – which undermines Garvey’s credibility by portraying him as incompetent or as a fool who did not know what he was talking about.

Garvey’s Testimony Analysed



Brother Omowale

It is important to understand that the arguments denying Garvey's testimony that he was a Christian, can only succeed at the expense of brandishing Garvey either a liar or a fool. The problem for these lines of argument is that history proves that Garvey was a man of great integrity as well as a man of outstandingly high intelligence. Since these arguments contradict history, they must inevitably be wrong. For instance, fools simply do not create mass organisations with millions of members spread across all of the continents of the world.

Finally, we can also observe that Garvey has never made any statement to say that he was not a Christian. He has never made a statement of retraction whilst he was in prison or after his release. In fact, he was deported from US Satan immediately following his release. For the rest of his life, he was outside the legal jurisdiction of US Satan. He could therefore have revealed that he was not really a Christian without fear of being jailed for contempt of court. However he has never made any such revelation. This is obviously because the words that he spoke in the kangaroo court were sensible, accurate, true and correct.

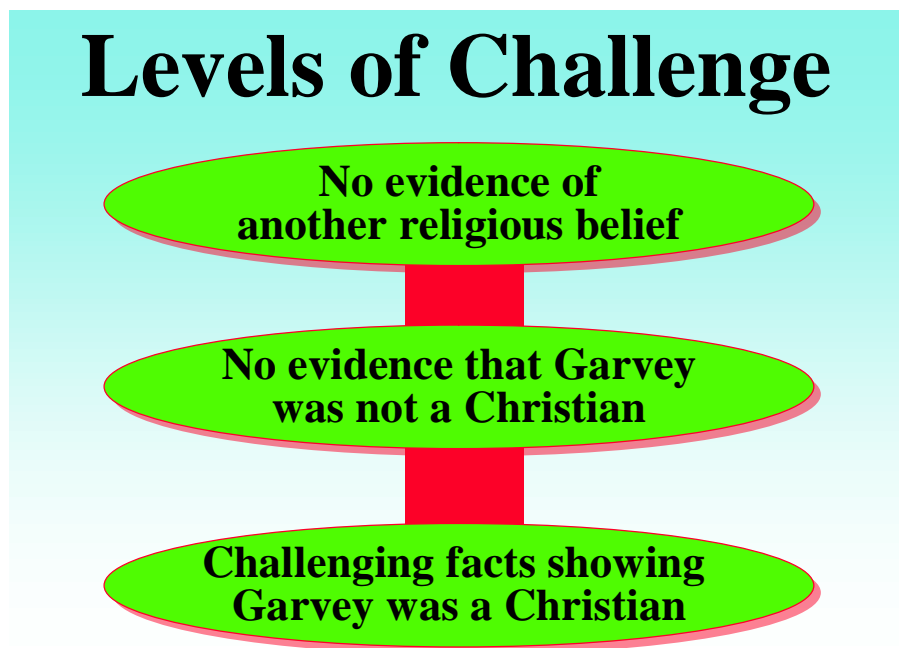
Who are we, some 100 years after Garvey was confirmed a Christian and some 80 years after he swore on oath that he was a Christian, to be challenging the historical fact that Garvey was a Christian? Garvey is, after all, our best witness. We must be honest with

ourselves and acknowledge that Marcus Garvey was a Christian - because he told us that he was.

Conclusion

This document identifies 16 pieces of factual evidence supporting the notion that Marcus Garvey was a Christian. Furthermore, since it does not claim to be a comprehensive survey, the likelihood is that more evidence could be uncovered with further research. Against this, there is no factual evidence supporting the notion that Garvey was not a Christian. Therefore, on the face of it, it appears that Garvey was a Christian.

Any challenges to the notion that Garvey was a Christian are likely to fall into one of three categories: (i) the first and highest is the production of evidence demonstrating that he had another religion; (ii) the second highest requires the production of evidence demonstrating that he was not a Christian; and (iii) the lowest level relies on simply challenging the interpretation of the many facts demonstrating that Garvey was a Christian without presenting any alternative.



Brother Omowale

At the first level, there appears to be no evidence supporting the notion that Garvey was of any religious persuasion other than Christianity. It is clear that Garvey did believe in God, so he could not have been and atheist or an agnostic. Since there does not appear to be any evidence of Garvey claiming to be anything other than a Christian; nor does there appear to be evidence linking Garvey to being a follower of another religion, any claims that he was not a Christian are seriously undermined.

At the second level, there does not appear to be any evidence of Marcus Garvey, his colleagues, his associates or even his contemporaneous enemies saying or claiming that he was not a Christian. The best efforts attempted at this level of challenge are pieces of evidence confirming Garvey's: (i) criticisms of Christianity; (ii) calls for Afrikan controlled institutions – including churches and; (iii) opposition to the imposition of European images of God on to Afrikan people. However, it is clear that a person can hold all of these positions and still be a Christian and this appears to have been the case with Garvey. In the debate surrounding whether or not Garvey was a Christian, these arguments are misnomers. The failure to produce factual evidence that Garvey was not a Christian, against the background of a multiplicity of pieces of factual evidence supporting the notion that Garvey was a Christian is tantamount to an admission that Garvey could only have been a Christian.

The third level involves mounting a comprehensive challenge to the many facts that substantiate the notion that Garvey was a Christian. This is a formidable task because these facts are not difficult to substantiate. Any attempts must therefore rest on attempting to construct stories around the facts designed to give the impression that the factual evidence identified does not automatically mean that Garvey was a Christian. These constructs face an uphill struggle because they have to explain things such as how it is that Garvey was not a Christian when he actually told us that he was; why as an alleged 'non-Christian' Garvey promoted 'Christian worship' in Afrika; why as an alleged 'non-Christian' Garvey was involved in setting up a Christian church – the Afrikan Orthodox Church; why as an alleged 'non-Christian' Garvey indicated that it was okay for Afrikan people to worship 'the God-head of the Christian church'; and why as an alleged 'non-Christian' Garvey actively sought to be 'Christian friends' with Europeans. In short, even if effective challenges could be mounted against some of the individual facts, the collective body of 16 pieces of factual evidence cannot be easily overturned.

This debate provides us with lessons on how to engage in objective thinking; how to distinguish between historical truth supported by relevant facts and unsubstantiated interpretations of history that we have grown accustomed to or simply would prefer to be the case. It helps us to determine: (i) how to identify arguments that are backed by relevant factual evidence; (ii) how to distinguish these arguments from those that do not have relevant factual evidence to support them and; (iii) how to weigh the relative importance of these differing categories of argument. An objective interpretation of history is more likely to provide us with a correct guide to actions aimed at Afrikan liberation.

In fact, we study history in order to decipher the lessons (both good and bad) from the past. This puts us in a position where we can intelligently apply what we have learned, to living in the present and planning the future. If we are unsuccessful in mastering this and other lessons in objective thinking and analysis, it will impact negatively on our ability to make

effective use of history. The effective use of history is absolutely essential, if we are to act correctly in our own best interests both in the present and the future. A subjectively based interpretation of history is bound to bring about corresponding misguided interpretations. Misguided interpretations will lead to ill-informed present day actions. By adopting ill-informed misguided present day actions we are likely to inadvertently contribute to our own oppression now and in the future.

For those people who, against the background of the overwhelming body of evidence to the contrary, continue to believe that Marcus Garvey was not a Christian, it might help to bring clarity if they attempt to answer to the following questions:

- It is clear that Marcus Garvey believed in God, therefore if Marcus Garvey was not a Christian, which other religion did he adhere to? What factual evidence exists to support this claim?
- What factual evidence exists to support the notion that Marcus Garvey was not a Christian?
- At which points during his 53 year lifespan do you say that Marcus Garvey was not a Christian? What factual evidence exists to support this claim?

Meaningful answers to these questions, supported by facts will advance the claim the Marcus Garvey was a Christian. Conversely, a failure to provide credible answers effectively dismisses the claim as baseless.

The available evidence proves that Garvey was a Christian. Our duty is to acknowledge and accept the fact that Marcus Garvey was a Christian rather than to attempt to deny this obvious historical truth. Only then will we put ourselves in a position where we encourage our Afrikan sisters and brothers who are Christians to practice their Christianity for the advancement of Afrikan people, in the way that Garvey did. Garvey saw the need to shift the focus of Afrikan people in the Christian churches towards an Afrikan liberation agenda. He saw the potential for Afrikan churches to operate as highly effective tools in that process. This is why he organised through the churches rather than against the churches.

Garvey was a truthful man who honestly interrogated history in order to bring the facts of Afrika's history to Afrikan people's attention. The purpose of unearthing those facts was to use them to help guide Afrikan people towards their liberation. He did not tinker with the facts of history to try to strengthen his case; he understood that we must work with the facts of history as they are. We must, in turn, be brave enough to acknowledge and accept the truth of history in the way that Garvey did. As the kangaroo court argument serves to prove, the more we deny the blatant truth and replace it with bogus stories, the more we create problems for ourselves by generating unsustainable off shoot scenarios that defy reality. Garvey understood this problem and his uncompromising stance on the issue of historical distortion was that:

"Every falsehood told by the historian should be unearthed ..." (Garvey, 1986, p. 82).

The way to properly honour Garvey is to identify the truth of his ideas and practices, with nothing added and nothing taken away. In this context, it means accepting that he was a Christian because as an honest, intelligent and principled man, he told us that he was. It also means applying Garvey's Christianity and other parts of his great legacy to the real world in a way that will assist us in building a united, liberated, just and powerful Afrikan nation today.

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Marcus Garvey Organising Committee

Fact Sheet Number 3: The UNIA & Religion

Evidence that Garvey was a Christian

- Garvey believed in God (Garvey, 1986, p. 11, 38, 43, 102 & 415)
- Garvey's mother and father were both Christians – Methodist denomination (Huntley, 1988, p. 5; Garvey, 1986, p. 124)
- Garvey attended an Anglican secondary school (UNIA Timeline)
- Garvey was confirmed a Christian – Catholic denomination (Garvey, 1986, p. 252)
- The UNIA initially promoted Christian worship in Afrika – it was later modified to spiritual worship (Clarke, 1974, p. 60; Garvey, 1986, p. 38; Martin, 1988, p. 31)
- Garvey's first marriage to Amy Ashwood on 25th December 1919 was Christian – Catholic (American Experience)
- In 1921 Garvey, through the UNIA, set up a Christian church – the Afrikan Orthodox Church (Garvey, 1970, p. 141; Hart, 2002, p. 73; African Orthodox Church Archives; Marcus Garvey)
- Garvey Spoke the words of a Christian at Christmas and Easter 1921 and 1922 (Garvey, 1986, p. 27-33 & 83-89)
- Garvey's second marriage to Amy Jacques on 27th July 1922 was Christian – Baptist (Hill, 1988, p. 694)
- In 1923, Garvey expressed 'a Christian desire to be friends with' European (Garvey, 1986, p. 37)
- Garvey wrote an oath on 5th June 1925 that he was 'always' a Christian (Garvey, 1986, p. 252)
- Garvey christened his first son Marcus Junior a Christian in September 1930 – Anglican (Garvey, 1970, p. 219)
- Garvey christened his second son Julius a Christian in August 1933 – Anglican (Garvey, 1970, p. 222)
- Garvey spoke as a Christian on 31st October 1937 (Hart, 2002, p. 66)
- Garvey advised Afrikan people that it was okay to hold a belief that links them to 'the Godhead of the Christian faith' (Martin, 1988, p. 101)
- Garvey was visited by Christian priests during the final stages of his life (Garvey, 1970, p. 261; Hart, 2002, p. 68)
- Garvey was initially buried on 14th June 1940 in the Catholic cemetery in Kensal Green, London, England; his remains were later transported to his birth place - Jamaica (UNIA Timeline)

The UNIA's approach to Religion

- UNIA was a predominantly Christian & Moslem organisation (Garvey, 1986, p. 141 & 305; Clarke, p. 60)
- Garvey incorporated a broad range of religions into the UNIA (Garvey, 1986, p. 135-143; Clarke, 443-451)
 - He actively promoted religious tolerance (Sons of Garvey Press Association, 1990, p. 24)
 - He actively promoted freedom of worship in the UNIA (Garvey, 1986, p. 135-143; Sons of Garvey, 1990, p. 24; Clarke, 1974, p. 443-451)
 - He opposed attacking religions (Sons of Garvey press association, 1990, p. 24)

Religion, disunity and unity in the UNIA

- It was not possible to unite Afrikan people on the basis of religion (Garvey, 1970, p. 269; Clarke, 1974, p. 429)
 - The objective of promoting Christianity in Afrika had to be amended (Martin, 1988, p. 31)
 - The 1922 convention attempt to turn the UNIA into an official Moslem organisation failed (Latif, 1994, p. 343)
 - The 1924 convention attempt to turn the UNIA into an official Christian organisation failed (Garvey, 1970, p. 141)
 - Christian inter-denominational rivalries fostered disunity in the UNIA (Garvey, 1970, p. 275)
 - The Afrikan Orthodox Church was established as a mechanism for uniting Afrikan Catholics and Protestants under one Christian banner (Garvey, 1970, p. 141; African Orthodox Church Archives)
- He believed in unity on the basis of race rather than religion (Garvey, 1970, p. 269; Clarke, 1974, p. 429)

Garvey's approach to religion

- Garvey saw religion as a tool which can be used both for and against Afrikan liberation (Clarke, 1974, p. 429; Latif, 1994, p. 343)
 - Some forces use Christianity to oppose Afrikan Liberation (Garvey, 1970, p. 104; Garvey, 1986, p. 44 & 98)
 - He condemned those that use Christianity to oppose Afrikan Liberation (Garvey, 1970, p. 104; Garvey, 1986, p. 44 & 98)
 - § He condemned the bullying imperialist nations (Garvey, 1970, p. 104)
 - § He condemned the selfish Afrikan preacher who exploited Afrikan people (Garvey, 1970, p. 324)
 - § He condemned unprincipled Christians who fail to live up to Christian standards (Garvey, 1986, p. 27)
- Garvey recognised that Afrikan people can use Christianity to their own benefit (Garvey, 1970, p. 157)
 - He organised through Churches (Garvey, 1986, p. 314)
 - He cautioned against the 'pie in the sky' approach to religion (Garvey, 1970, p. 104)
 - Bible cannot solve all our problems (Garvey, 1986, p. 7)
 - Our problems are man made, not God made (Garvey, 1986, p. 7)
 - § God won't solve them (Clarke, 1974, p. 429)
 - § We must solve them (Garvey, 1986, p. 7)
 - § He co-opted religion for the Afrikan liberation struggle (Clarke, 1974, p. 429)
- He reconfigured Christianity for Afrikan Liberation (Clarke, 1974, p. 429)
 - Afrikan God, Mary and Jesus (Garvey, 1970, p. 141 & 323; Clarke, 1974, 382)
 - Afrikan Primate (Garvey, 1986, p. 285; Clarke, 1974, p. 382)
 - Practically solving the problems of Afrikan people (Garvey, 1986, p. 7)
 - § God does not take sides in earthly matters, people must sort out these problems (Garvey, 1986, p. 76; Clarke, 1974, p. 337)
 - § Mastery of science is the practical way forward (Garvey, 1986, p. 14 & 33)

Learning Exercise

For each of the facts identified and referenced above, please answer the following questions:

1. Is this fact correct?
2. Is this fact relevant to:
 - Non-Afrikan attendances at UNIA meetings?
 - UNIA alliances with non-Africans?
3. Are there other factors to take into consideration?
4. How is this fact relevant to us today?
5. In the light of this fact and current circumstances, how should it impact on our behaviour today?

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