



Lofty dome of America Bahá'í House of Worship, viewed from interior, reflects spirituality of faith. Disc in center is holy symbol in the Bahá'í religion.

BAHÁ'Í:

A way of life for millions



House of Worship in Wilmette Illinois, is center of American Bahá'í community. Like great cathedrals of Europe, temple was built slowly and intermittently over a period of 50 Years. The Bahá'í temple, which has been called a "Taj Mahal" of the West, is visited annually by thousands of tourists of all faiths. Wilmette is suburb of Chicago.



Believers of many races, colors and backgrounds attended world congress of the faith in London's Royal Albert Hall in 1963. Members of the Bahá'í faith believe in necessity and inevitability of the complete unification of mankind.



At Bahá'í Institute, Green Lake, Wisconsin Gina Browder, Danny Reimer stroll through woods.

Future of faith Bahá'í authorities say, is in hands of young. Bahá'í group above attends University of Wisconsin. Bahá'í youth grow up in integrated spiritual communities. Most are completely free of all forms of prejudice.



World's newest religion stresses brotherhood, peace

ONE hundred and twenty-one years ago in a remote city of Persia, a young merchant made an astounding announcement. Within nineteen years, he said, God would send another prophet made in the image of Buddha and Muhammad and Christ.

The response to this announcement was immediate and overwhelming. Thousands of persons flocked to the banner of the young merchant who assumed the title of the Báb (literally "the Gate") and announced that his mission was the fulfillment of past religions and the heralding of a prophet and teacher who would establish a new cycle in the history-long dialogue between God and man. Frightened by the brush-fire growth of the Bábis (followers of the BA), civil and religious authorities initiated a reign of terror, martyring thousands including the Báb. But this did not damp the fire of the movement which leaped from heart to heart, fueled now by the ancient hope that God would again speak to man through a man. Thirteen years after the martyrdom of the BA, on April 21, 1863, the son of a Persian nobleman stood before a group in a garden in

Baghdad and said that he was the "Manifestation" and that he was the same divine authority as Moses, Muhammad, and Christ.

This man was Husayn-'Ali, who assumed the title of Bahá'u'lláh ("the Glory o God").

On his rock has been erected a new world religion that claims the minds and hearts of millions of believers in 280 countries, islands, and dependencies. Members of this faith call themselves Bahá'ís (followers of Bahá'u'lláh). They believe in one God and give equal homage to Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, and other "Manifestations." Bahá'ís believe however, that religion progressively evolves and that Bahá'u'lláh is God's spokesman for this age.

Far from being an exotic Eastern sect, the Bahá'í faith is uniquely practical and it speaks with great authority to the troubled mind of contemporary man. Scholars, scientists and royalty have embraced the faith. It as been praised by, among others, Dowager Queen Marie of



At Bahá'í Summer School in Eliot, Maine Bahá'í youth splash in the surf. Bahá'ís condemn all forms of prejudice and superstition. The purpose of religion, they say, is the promotion of amity and concord in this world. Founder of faith forbade use of all alcoholic beverages and exalted trades and professions "to the rank of worship."



At world center of Bahá'í Faith in Haifa Israel three members of House of justice, David Hofman of England Amoz Gibson of the U.S. and Hushman Fatheazam of Persia chat in flower gardens near beautiful, golden-domed Bahá'í Shrine.

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Rumania and Tolstoi, Somalis, Laotians, Finns, Lapps, Swedes, Germans, Negroes, Englishmen, and Southern and Northern whites have found in it an image of their condition and an image of their hope.

Theology apart, the Bahá'í principle has been extraordinarily effective in shattering the barriers between men. Stressing the importance of practical improvements in the social conditions of men, Bahá'ís have been very active in the fight against prejudice. They teach generally by demonstrating, for it is an article of their faith that deeds are more powerful than words. Within Bahá'í communities, Negroes and whites, men and women, Asians, Africans and Europeans stand on a basis of absolute equality. Believers, moreover, are enjoined to take their creed seriously, even to the point of marriage. American Negroes play a highly important and highly visible role in Bahá'í communities, not only as members of local and national assemblies but also as human beings who interact with other members of the faith on a human and non-racial level.

The chief principle of the faith, which is one of the fastest-growing religions in the world today, is "the oneness and the wholeness of the human race." A Bahá'í proverb says: "A rose is beautiful in whatever garden it may bloom. We are each flowers in the great garden." The major purpose of the faith is to unite the entire world in one religion and one social order. Among the dominant principles of the Bahá'ís are:

- 1) Independent investigation of the truth.
- 2) Essential harmony of science and religion.
- 3) Recognition of the divine foundation of all religions.
- 4) Universal compulsory education.
- 5) Equality of men and women.
- 6) Spiritual solution of economic problems.
- 7) Need for a universal auxiliary language.
- 8) Universal peace based upon a world federation of nations.
- 9) Elimination of prejudice.
- 10) Recognition of the essential unity of mankind.

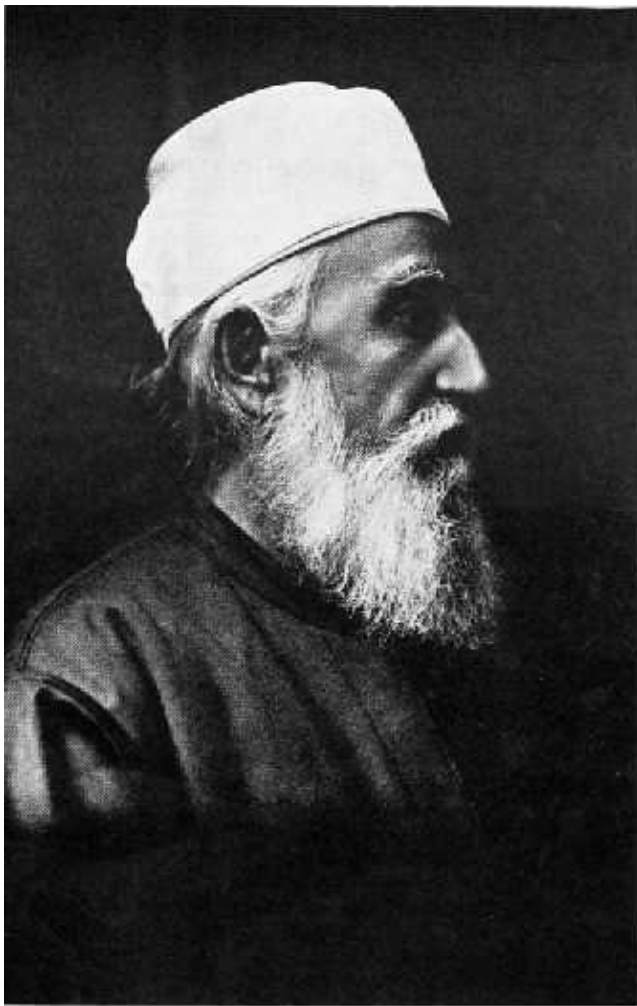
Although the Bahá'í faith honors the "essentials" of other religions,



← **In Kampala, Uganda,** Bahá'ís and friends congregate left on lawn after service in modern African temple (background).



→ **At opening of temple** in Frankfurt Ger. Elaine Baker c. Beth McKenty r. of U.S. join German Barbara Thinat.



'Abdu'l-Bahá, one of three major figures of the religion was eldest son of founder. 'Abdu'l-Bahá who died in 1921, carried message of new religion to Western world laid cornerstone of American temple.

it is neither eclectic nor syncretic. Bahá'ís have their own holy scripture and their own laws based primarily on the life and insights of Bahá'u'lláh who was born on November 12, 1817, in Persia. The precocious son of a wealthy nobleman, Bahá'u'lláh was raised in easy circumstances which he abandoned to follow the Báb. Because of his advocacy of the new revelation, Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned, tortured, and finally exiled. While imprisoned in a vermin-infested cell, the bearded religious prophet became aware of his mission.

After Bahá'u'lláh revealed himself to his followers, Turkish officials shunted him from prison to prison in an abortive effort to destroy his influence. In 1868, the troublesome religious prisoner was sent to the pestilential Turkish prison colony at 'Akká near present-day Haifa in the Holy Land. Instead of destroying Bahá'u'lláh's influence, this development expanded it, for, to the faithful, the transfer to 'Akká confirmed the ancient prophecy that "the Lord of Hosts would be manifested in the Holy Land."

Not only followers but also scholars and high state officials sought out Bahá'u'lláh for blessings and advice. Finally, Turkish officials allowed the revered prophet to take up residence in a rustic mansion at nearby Bahjí, where he died in 1892.

By all accounts, Bahá'u'lláh was an extraordinary personage. The only Westerner to interview him, Professor Edward G Browne, the famous Cambridge University Orientalist, wrote: "The face of him on whom I gazed, I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow while the deep lines on the forehead and face implied an age which the jet black hair and beard flowing down to indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain!"

During 40 years of exile and imprisonment, Bahá'u'lláh wrote more than 100 books and tablets which are the basis of the Bahá'í faith. In his writings, according to Bahá'í authorities, Bahá'u'lláh states that unity is the central problem of the modern age. Bahá'u'lláh's approach to life and religion were founded on two concepts: 1) unity-"the unity of God, the unity of His prophets and the oneness and wholeness of



Representatives of American Bahá'í community were photographed before House of Worship at 55th annual convention. Despite some harassment by White Citizens Councils the faith is growing in the South.



Hawaii Bahá'í community includes descendants of several stocks. New members are attracted by example of members and the activities of pioneers.



Navajo Indian couple, Mr. and Mrs. Chester Kahn discuss expansion of faith with Bahá'í member. Faith has grown rapidly in Africa in recent

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man"-and, 2) progressive revelation, the idea that is the evolution religion o one faith which sows different faces to different ages. In the view o contemporary Ba a Is Moses Buddha, Zoroaster Krishna, Jesus, Mohammad and Bahá'u'lláh were successive "Manifestations" through whom God has progressively revealed the meaning of life.

After Bahá'u'lláh's death, his message was carried to the Western world by his eldest son Abdu'l-Bahá who visited in 1912

Dressed in a Persian cloak and turban and accompanied by a racially-mixed party, Abdu'l-Bahá criss-crossed the country, sowing the seeds of the new faith. Among the groups he addressed were a Howard University audience and conference of the fourth annual conference the NAACP. Far in advance of his time, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said the chief problems for the age were peace an human brotherhood. The Bahá'í sage told Americans that if they could solve their major spiritual problem, the race problem, America's influence would be decisive in the formulation of a new world order. To members of his own faith Abdu'l-Bahá insisted on complete fidelity to the Bahá'í principle of unity. In a 1912 tablet, he told " American Bahá'ís: "If it be possible, gather together these two races, black and white, into one Assembly, and put such love into their hearts that they shall not only unite rite but even intermarry. Be sure that the result of this will abolish differences an disputes between black and white. Moreover by the Will of God, may it be so. This is a great service to humanity."

During the ministry of Abdu'l-Bahá and his successor Shoghi Effendi the faith made enormous gains. At the death of Shoghi Effendi in 1957, there were Bahá'í communities in every major or country in the world. Today, there are more than 14,000 Bahá'í centers. In America alone, there are more than 300 assemblies and some 1,700 centers of the faith. The 100th anniversary

meeting of the faithful, at a world congress in London in 1963, was a living testimonial to the reach of the faith. Some 7,000 Bahá'í delegates of practically every race and stock attended the convention which has been called "one of the greatest admixtures of people and cultures in world history."

From an administrative standpoint, the religion consists of a series of local communities. Administrative control is centered in Local and National Spiritual Assemblies. Both national and local assemblies are composed of nine members elected for one-year terms. Local assemblies are elected by the entire adult community. National Spiritual Assemblies which administer the affairs of national groups are elected annually by delegates from each region. The international control center, the Universal House of justice, administers affairs of the faith from Haifa, Israel. Members of this body are elected to five-year terms by members of the National Spiritual Assemblies. At a 1963 meeting, four Americans were elected to the House of justice, including a Negro educator, Amoz Gibson.

The Bahá'í community has neither a priesthood nor rituals. At Bahá'í religious ceremonies, there are no collections or sermons. The heart of the spiritual life of the community is the 19-day feast which is held on the first day of every Bahá'í month (The Bahá'í calendar has 19 months consisting of days that start at sunset instead of midnight.). The 19-day feast is conducted simply and informally in three stages. The first part consists of readings of passages from the writings of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and Abdu'l-Bahá. This devotional meeting is followed by a general business meeting and a feast. In addition to the 19-day feast, Bahá'í communities hold a great variety of cultural and spiritual meetings. In the absence of a professional clergy, members are charged with the responsibility of deepening their faith by continuous study, prayer, and discussion.

Bahá'ís take their religion seriously. To a Bahá'í, there is no demarcation between religion and everyday life. The most important prayer, Bahá'ís say, is a person's daily life. Religion, in other words, is an "attitude toward God reflected in life." According to Bahá'í writings, "All effort and exertion put forth by man from the fullness of his heart



Leroy Loas, one of select group of international stewards designated "Hands of the Cause," chats with Dr. Eugene Byrd (r.).



Bahá'í pioneers, former insurance executive Ellsworth Blackwell and wife Ruth settled in Port-au-Prince Haiti in 1960.



As Bahá'í "pioneer" in Norway, Lucille Webster (r), formerly of Cleveland is helping to expand the faith in Scandinavian area. She is employed by Department of State. Only Negro Bahá'í in Norway, she was elected chairman of country's Assembly.



National Spiritual Assembly, chief administrative body of U.S. group, holds meeting at Wilmette Ill, head quarters. One Negro, Dr. Sarah M. Pereira c. is member of group. Dr. David S. Ruhe (r.) is National Assembly secretary.

International leader, Amoz Gibson takes sun on Haifa's Mount Carmel with wife Mary, and children Donald, Kenneth Nancy. Eldest William is studying in U.S.



In House of Justice Office in Haifa, Gibson, a former Washington educator, checks correspondence with secretary, Mrs. Braulia Caban, formerly of New York.



At Bahá'í Institute at Green Lake Wisconsin three Bahá'ís hold a n i m a t e d conversation. At institute Youth and adults discussed practical ways of implementing brotherhood and deepening bonds of their faith.



At Bahá'í service in temple in Uganda, Catherine Kabale reads prayer. Membership is granted on personal declaration of faith to adult men and women. Some three hundred Americans, including many Negroes, are spreading faith abroad.

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is worship if it is prompted by the highest motives and the will to do service to humanity."

Believers must also carry out teaching activities which are roughly comparable to the missionary activities of other faiths. In local communities, Bahá'ís hold "firesides" (religious study groups) in their homes and elsewhere to acquaint interested parties with tenets of the faith. Thousands of Bahá'ís also leave their native land and become "pioneers" in foreign countries. Bahá'í "pioneers" are not called missionaries because they are not supported by the faith. "Pioneers" support themselves and advance the faith by becoming a part of the community (as teachers, doctors, medical technicians, etc.).

Like the early Christians, Bahá'ís live their faith. In America, they have pioneered in creating truly integrated communities. Not only in the North but also in the South, Bahá'ís live Shoghi Effendi's injunction: "Freedom from racial prejudice, in any of its forms, should be adopted as the watchword of the entire body of the American believers, in whatever state they reside. It should be consistently demonstrated in every phase of their activity and life, in public or in private. It should be deliberately cultivated in their homes, their business offices, their schools and colleges, their social parties and recreation grounds:"

To members of the faith, the Bahá'í community is a visible sign of the destined triumph of unity over separatism. Within the folds of the faith, sharing a practical, day-to-day brotherhood, are millionaires and maids, black men and white men, Southerners and Northerners, former Moslems, Hindus, Christians, Jews. Of whatever station, of whatever background, Bahá'ís believe their faith answers the deep hunger of modern man for wholeness. Because their belief is a form of action, Bahá'ís are proving in action Bahá'u'lláh's vision: "Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one Branch..."



BE GENEROUS in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor; an admonisher to the rich, an answerer of the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger; a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be an ornament to the countenance of truth, a crown to the brow of fidelity, a pillar of the temple of righteousness, a breath of life to the body of mankind, an ensign of the hosts of justice, a luminary above the horizon. of virtue, a dew to the soil of the human heart, an ark on the ocean of knowledge, a sun in the heaven of bounty, a gem on the diadem of wisdom, a shining light in the firmament of thy generation, a fruit upon the tree of humility.

—BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Author of the award-winning *Before The Mayflower: A History of The Negro in America 1619-1962*, Lerone Bennett Jr. has long been interested in the great figures of Negro history, both past and present.

His newly-published biography of Martin Luther King, *What Manner of Man*, has been acclaimed for its perceptive assessment of the contribution being made by the great proponent of non-violence, Dr. King. Mr. Bennett has also written a book of essays surveying the American civil rights' scene, *The Negro Mood*.

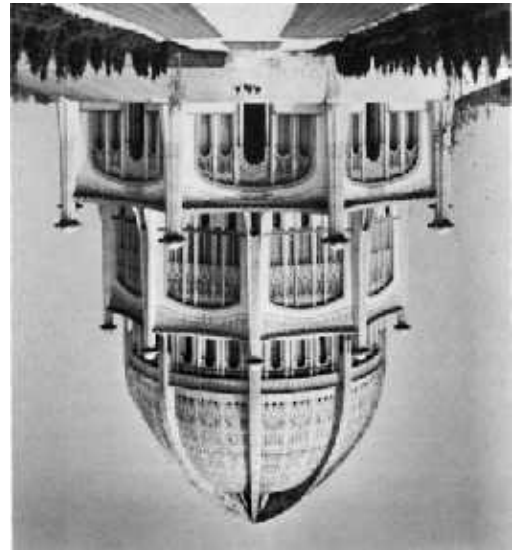


Born in Clarksdale, Mississippi, in 1928, he grew up in Jackson, Mississippi, and attended Episcopal parochial school. He graduated from public high school in 1945, and as a teen-ages worked as a reporter on the Jackson Advocate and the Mississippi Enterprise. Mr. Bennett majored in political science and economics, graduating with honors from Morehouse College, Atlanta, in 1949. He was editor of his school paper and year-book. After studying political science in the graduate school at Atlanta University for a brief period, Mr. Bennett joined the *Atlanta Daily World* as a reporter.

Except for a period of service overseas with the American army in Germany, Mr. Bennett remained with the *Atlanta Daily World* until 1953, when he resigned from his position as City Editor to become associate editor of JET magazine, with the Johnson Publishing Company in Chicago:

Married to the former Gloria Sylvester, a journalist before her marriage, the Bennetts are the parents of four children.

Mr. Bennett has received the Windy City Press Club Award for outstanding magazine writing. His hobbies include chess, reading and collecting records.



EBONY

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WHEN THE RACIAL elements of the American nation unite in actual fellowship and accord, the lights of the oneness of humanity will shine, the day of eternal glory and bliss will dawn, the spirit of God encompass and the Divine favors descend. Under the leadership and training of God, the real shepherd, all will be protected and preserved. He will lead them in green pastures of happiness and sustenance and they will attain to the real goal of existence. This is the blessing and benefit of unity; this is the outcome of love.

IN THE ESTIMATION Of God there is no distinction of color; all are one in the color and beauty of servitude to Him. Color is not important; the heart is all-important. It matters not what the exterior may be if the heart is pure

—`ABDU'L-BAHÁ

BOOKS ON BAHÁ'Í FAITH

Foundations of World Unity by `Abdu'l-Bahá. Public talks by the Son of the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith given on His historic Western journey of 1912, in churches, universities and at many public gatherings.

Thief in the Night. William Sears. Examination of Old and New Testament prophecies relating to the Bahá'í Faith.

Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era. J. E. Esslemont. A basic handbook on the Bahá'í Faith with chapters on Religious Unity; The Way to Peace; Religion and Science; Prophecy Fulfilled; Prayer; Health and Healing, and others.

Please contact your local Bahá'í Center for above books. Many are also available in your public library, or you may order direct from Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 415 Linden Avenue, Wilmette, IL 60091.

For further information or literature on the Bahá'í Faith, please contact the Bahá'í Center in your community. If none listed, write Bahá'í National Center, Dept. C, 112 Linden Avenue, Wilmette, IL 60091.