

Baha'i Faith Based On World Unity And Tolerance

By ALBERT BARNETT

WILMETTE

The Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, with its unique and impressive architectural design, is an inspiring sight on the shore of Lake Michigan, and stands like a Lighthouse and Beacon to welcome all within its sacred portals who are dedicated to the Unity of God, the Unity of His Prophets and the Unity of Mankind.

Baha'i Temple is the only church structure of its kind in the Western Hemisphere, symbolic in its composition and of such matchless beauty that all approach it with profound humility and resignation.

50 YEARS TO BUILD

Located in the center of a six-acre tract, the Temple Dome rises 165 feet above the surrounding terrain. It was erected at a total cost of more than 2 million, 600 thousand dollars, and required 50 years to complete the work of construction.

The stately edifice was dedicated on May 2, 1953, as "the dawning place of praises," and all expenses — from ground-breaking to landscaping — were defrayed by contributions from Baha'is all over the world. The Temple has been visited by more than 600,000 people as individuals or in tourist groups from the United States and foreign countries.

WHAT THE TEMPLE MEANS

A Baha'i brochure states: "The Temple is a symbol and precursor of world civilization. A Baha'i Temple is the spiritual comple-

ment of the administrative institutions centered in any locality, and the heart of a group of humanitarian and scientific institutions to be erected around it."

There you have the practical philosophy and creed of the Baha'i Faith, founded more than 100 years ago by a Persian called the BAB—Bha'is' John the Baptist—who announced himself as the herald of the coming of a great educator. The BAB was killed in 1850, and two years later, another Persian, Baha'u'llah, started laying down the main body of Baha'i doctrine.

A GREAT PROPHET

Baha'u'llah died in 1892, and he was succeeded as leader by his eldest son, Abdul'l-Baha, until 1921, when the latter's grandson, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, assumed the hereditary title, "Guardian of the Faith." He presides over international headquarters in Haifa, Israel. Baha'is revere Baha'u'llah as the latest of a series of great prophets, including Moses, Christ, Zoroaster and Mohammed — who have brought Divine revelation to mankind.

"The Revelation, of which Baha'u'llah" is the source and center, abrogates none of the religions that have preceded it, nor does it attempt, in the slightest degree, to distort their features or to belittle their value.

It disclaims intention of dwarfing any of the Prophets of the past, or of whittling down the eternal verity of their teachings. It can, in no wise, conflict with the spirit that animates their claims, nor does it seek to undermine

the basis of any man's allegiance to their cause.

THE BAHAI OBJECTIVE

Its primary purpose is to enable every adherent of those Faiths to obtain a fuller understanding of the religion with which he stands identified, and to acquire a clearer comprehension of its purpose. It is neither eclectic in the presentation of its truth, nor arrogant in the affirmation of its claims.

Its teachings revolve around the fundamental principle that Religious truth is not absolute but relative, and that Divine Revelation is Progressive, not final.

Unequivocally and without the least reservation it proclaims all established Religions to be Divine in Origin, continuous in their purpose and indispensable in their value to mankind.

The anniversary of the birth of Baha'u'llah will be observed in the Baha'i Temple, Wilmette, on Sunday evening, Nov. 11, and one of the speakers will be Mrs. Joy Earl, Colored member of the Baha'i Faith.

PROMINENT BAHAI'S

Mrs. Earl, has been prominent in Baha'i activities in Cleveland and Detroit. She has conducted classes at the various Baha's summer schools and has travelled extensively in the midwest on speaking tours. She recently returned from Japan for a brief stay in the United States and will return to Japan in December, where she and her husband will resume their activities as Baha'i pioneers. Mrs. Earl is teaching English at one of the Universities in Japan.

The idea for the National shrine

in Chicago was approved in 1903, by Abdul-Baha, who specified that it should have NINE SIDES. Horace Holley, secretary of the Baha'i National assembly explains that this number was selected because: "NINE is the highest digit, the symbol of perfection and fulfillment." As a result, all Baha'i Temples, the world over have NINE sides which symbolize comprehensiveness and unity.

TO BUILD MORE TEMPLES

Within the next seven years, other Baha'i Temples will be erected in Germany, Africa and Scandinavia. The Faith has spread to 249 countries, Islands and territories, with a total of more than 3,700 localities.

Baha'u'llah, founder of the Faith, preached the doctrine of brotherly love and racial harmony, more than 100 years ago and among his writings are found the following quotes:

"Close your eyes to racial differences and welcome all with the light of oneness."

"Ye dwell in one world, and have been created through the operation of one Will. Blessed is he who minglenth with all men in a spirit of utmost kindness and love."

"The well being of mankind, its peace and security are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established"

MR. ABBOTT A MEMBER

The late Robert S. Abbott, founder and publisher of the Chicago Defender, was one of the many Chicagoans who embraced the Baha'i Faith and played in important part in construction of the House of Worship.

Other Chicago Baha'is are Mrs. Kathelynea Kellum, Ellsworth Blackwell, Gloster Edwards, Earl Winston, Clarence Spigall, Edgar Edwards, Isabel Washington, Robert Williams and many others.

The auditorium of the Temple is open to all people for prayer and meditation. No race or religion is barred. Services are not elaborate and there is no ritualism or set form. Baha'is have no professional clergy to preside, and sermons or lectures are not permitted in the auditorium. There are readings of selections from the Sacred Scriptures of the Baha'i Faith and the other great Faiths of the world. The only music is by soloists and a Cappella choir.

NO COLLECTIONS TAKEN

Baha'is do not solicit funds from the public for any of their activities. The Temple is a building where men and women of all races and religions are welcome to come for prayer.

Here no creed stigmatizes the follower of any great faith, as infidel or pagan. Here all men may turn their hearts to God and know that they are brothers.