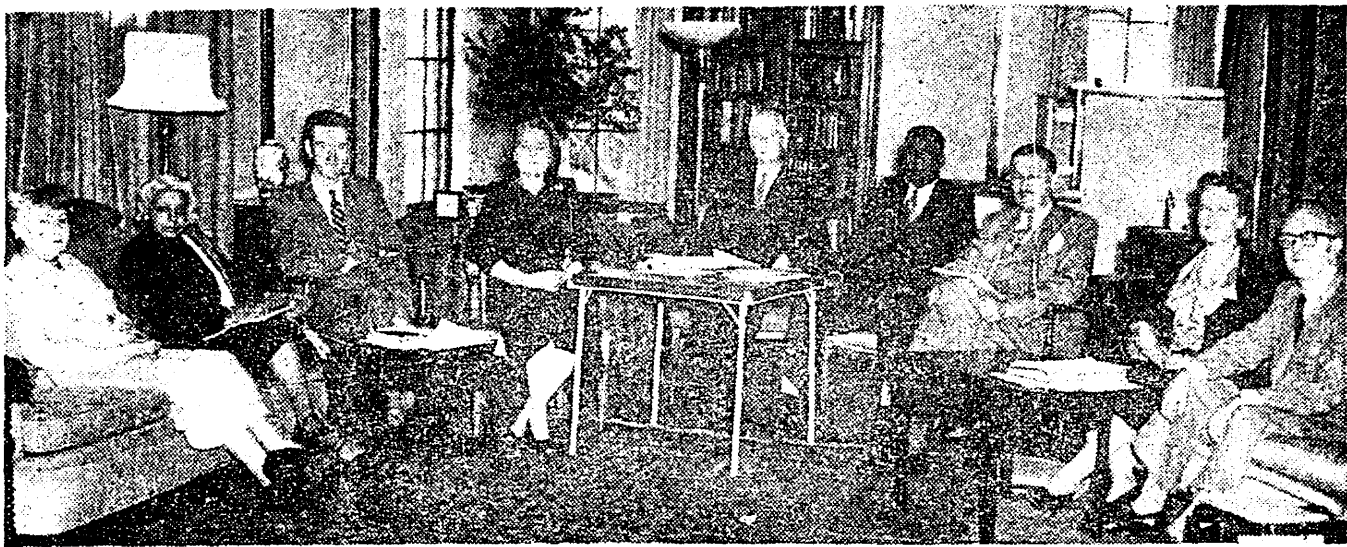


Baha'i Worshippers To Dedicate Temple May 2



NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY of the Bahais of the United States included left to right: Mrs. Mamie Seto, San Francisco; Miss Elsie Austin, Washington, D. C.; Paul E. Haney, economist, Washington, D. C. chairman; Miss Edna True, recording secretary, Wil-

mette; Horace Holley, secretary, Wilmette; Matthew W. Bullock, former chairman, Massachusetts State Parole Board, Boston; H. Borrah Kevelin, treasurer, New York; Mrs. Dorothy Baker, vice chairman, Lima, Ohio, and Dr. Kenneth Christian, Lansing, Mich.

By MATTIE SMITH COLIN

One of the world's best elaborate monuments to man's spiritual faith will be consecrated May 2 in hourly public services in Wilmette, Ill., when Baha'i Faith worshippers from 128 countries dedicate their majestic House of Worship.

Dedication of the \$2,600,000 structure a building project which covers a period of 50 years — will be held immediately following the Baha' is 45th annual convention April 29 through May 1 at the Medinah Temple in Chicago.

Plans for the construction of the temple were made in 1902 by a small group of early believers of the Baha'i World Faith. Conceived in faith by a penniless few, it stands today in regal splendor on the shores of Lake Michigan, with its intricately designed dome reaching high into the heavens.

PRAYER, SACRIFICE

Baha'i House of Worship is steeped in symbolism. It is symbolic of the faith of Bah'a'i' believers — nourished through fifty years of prayer and sacrifice. With its nine sides, it is symbolic of the "great religions of the world." It is symbolic of the Bah'a'i' Faith itself, which has never stooped to racial discrimination since its inception 109 years ago in Persia (now called Iran).

The Faith was introduced to the United States at the World Par-

liament of Religions, held in Chicago in conjunction with the Columbian Exposition of 1893. Ten years later came the plans for the construction of the temple. At that time, there were but a few hundred American Bah'a'is.

The symbolic act of laying the cornerstone was performed May 1, 1912, on the present site of the Baha'i temple. In charge of the ceremonies was 'Abfu'l-Baha', eldest son of the founder of the faith, Baha'u'llah.

GLORY OF GOD

Baha'u'llah (which means "the glory of God") advised his followers to build a temple "in each community" and that the "only architectural requirement" was that each edifice be erected with nine sides. Nine, the largest single number, represent to the Baha' is two things: (1) "the coming of age of the human race" and (2) the "greatest religions of the world." The latter consists of Sabeian, Hindu, Jewish, Zoroastrian, Buddhist, Christian, Islam, Babi (Muhammand) and Baha'i.

As to the different races and classes, Baha'u'll'ah taught that "the purpose of religion . . . is to unite the conflicting races and nations in one faith and a common world civilization. He changed religion from personal salvation to a means for building a world order."

On the present nine-member governing board, the National Baha'i Assembly, are two Negroes: Miss Elsie Austin of Cincinnati, Ohio an attorney who is presently a member of the National Labor Relations Board, Washington, D. C., and Matthew W. Bullock, one of the first non-white graduates of Harvard Law School, now retired of Boston, Mass.

Probably the most striking aspect of the temple's architecture is its lace-like ornamentation, carved with painstaking delicacy, and cast in molds of concrete and white quartz. The exterior and interior motifs are constructed of "Early Stone", which according to Chicago architect, Alfred P. Shaw, who has carried forward the interior construction since August 1947, "Early Stone is the best available.

The auditorium is the entire main floor with no partitioning. The seats in the center all face the holy land. This arrangement is in recognition of the fact that the martyred founder of the faith died in exile in 'Akka, Palestine. He was banished by the religious leaders of Islam to Baghdad, thence to Constantinople and Adrianople, and finally to 'Akka. Seats in the alcoves face the center. The seating capacity is 1,200.

Unlike most religious institutions of worship, the Bahai'i temple has no pulpit. Here, sermons are simple readings from the Scriptures. Instead of professional clerics, the members are addressed by readers.

It is interesting to note that Baha'u'll'ah emphasizes the following principles "to help bind people together in a united world":

(1) "Men must seek for truth in spite of custom, prejudice and privileges.

(2) "Men and women must have equal opportunities, rights and privileges.

(3) "The nations must choose an international language to be used along with the mother tongue."

(4) "All children must receive a basic education."

(5) "Men must make a systematic effort to wipe out all those prejudices which divide people."

(6) "Men must recognize that religion should go hand-in-hand with science."

(7) "Men must work to abolish extreme wealth and extreme poverty."