



ALBERT Barnett

World Baha'ists Preach 'Oneness of Mankind'

ALTHOUGH the basic tenet of all religious faiths is the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man it is surprising that so many of our people know so little about those denominations whose memberships are small, but still are making notable contributions to the uplift of humanity.

The average person knows of the Roman Catholic church and its splendid international program of peace and understanding. He also knows of the larger Protestant Denominations—the Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, etc.

But when you mention the Baha'i Faith, for instance, you are more than likely to get a blank stare from the person interviewed. Engrossed in their own church interests and activities the average communicant is unfamiliar with the constructive, commendable Baha'i program, which is fundamentally interracial, inter-denominational and international in scope.

Baha'ists recognize no distinction of race, religion or color and all are welcome to attend their services. That service is based on Unity—One God, One Religion, One Mankind. No records are kept as to the race or creed of communicants, so it is impossible to give the number of Negro Baha'ists, though their ranks are growing.

The Baha'i Temple in Wilmette, Northside Chicago suburb, is one of the most stately and architecturally perfect church edifices in the world. Eleven years were spent in architectural research, before even the foundation was laid. Started in 1921 it has cost to date \$1,500,000, and the building is still far from completion.

Horace Holly, prominent Wilmette resident, is secretary of the National Baha'i Assembly and chairman of the Assembly's public relations department. He told this writer that 31 races, speaking 41 different languages, are represented in the Baha'i World Assembly, and all are admitted to worship on an equal scale and status. One of the basic principles of Baha'ism is that there be no discrimination against any person because of race, color or nationality.

Within the past five years, two Negroes of national prominence, have been elected to the Baha'i National Assembly, governing body of the faith. They are Elsie Austin of Washington, D. C., noted attorney, now serving with the Labor Department and Louis Gregory of Eliot, Maine, widely known author and lecturer.

Baha'ists, the world over, practice what they preach—the oneness of mankind. Southern American Dixiecrats, hate-mongers and Jim Crow advocates would do well to take time out and reflect upon the credo of this faith. It would redound to the everlasting credit of this 'arsenal of democracy,' if it would adhere to world democracy principles of Baha'ism.

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