JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Everyone A Preacher

There are no paid clergymen among the almost 200,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in this country. Each member is a preacher in his own right.

By Marley Cole

"Preaching is a fundamental Bible principle of Christians, you cannot take Christianity seriously unless you demonstrate it by public proclamation as well as by conduct."

These are the words of a Baltimore school teacher, and member of Jehovah's Witnesses, and they explain one of the basic credos of the sect.

The Witnesses have transformed their entire memberships into preaching fellowships. This has been done by evolving their local church services into elaborate and highly advanced Bible seminaries.

More than 16,000 of these educational centers, called Kingdom Halls are maintained.

The church services, held weekly, are educational sessions. Every one takes part, with the males presiding. No one ever graduates.

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ONE EVENING a week—usually Thursday—comes a two-hour basic training program.

The first part is devoted—to Kingdom Ministry, a service meeting in which everyone learns how to prepare doorstep sermons, how to conduct private Bible tutoring classes (free of charge) with interested persons, how to deal tactfully, patiently with others and to develop thinking ability to maintain balance under all situations.

The second class is called Theocratic Ministry.

Here student speakers are grilled in the arts and science of public speaking — composition, grammar, articulation, sense, stress, poise, personal appearance.

Here the Bible is covered chapter by chapter in public reading practice and analytical study.

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ON SUNDAY afternoon or evening another twin program includes a public discourse followed by a class study outlined in their official journal The Watchtower.

With a circulation of 3,500,000 in 46 languages, The Watchtower covers Bible principles, doctrine and prophecy.

It is here in The Watchtower study that Jehovah's Witnesses get their Biblical "meat in due season."

The final church service is called the "area service center meeting." For this meeting a congregation breaks up and deploys in small groups of 10 to 15, that meet in private homes. It too involves two hours of time.

The first hour is devoted to house-to-house calls, or calls on previously contacted persons who desire private Bible tutoring.

Following the hour's field service the area group gathers for a Bible study. Here, not only is doctrine digested, but training in the arts of Bible tutoring is demonstrated.

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WHILE THE five weekly classes provide the theory, it is in field preaching and daily living that theory is applied and proven.

The average Witness of Jehovah—family head, housewife, schoolager, devotes from two to 25 hours a week to field preaching.

Advanced training in Bible knowledge and New World community living are provided twice a year in the form of special three - day seminars called circuit assemblies.

About 20 congregations comprise a circuit.

Once a year a five-day district assembly of about 20 circuits is held.

Every three years or so a national, international or world convention is held. It lasts eight days.

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BECAUSE THEIR religion provides Jehovah's Witnesses a total living program, it solves within its own boundary of Bible ethics every aspect of social life.

For example, the Witnesses accept the Christian rule that a man should be "husband of one wife."

In Moslem countries, in parts of Africa, and Latin America, where polygamy and common-law or consensual marriage are either sanctioned or countenanced, the Witnesses make no compromise.

It is a thing to behold when some Moslem man or African native sheds his wives or concubines and legalizes his marriage to one mate.

It is no less a marvel when men in Ecuador or Argentina give up their **companeras** and marry the woman who has, for a dozen years or more, kept their house and born their children.

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DELINQUENCY IS solved in the same process of applying Bible rules to family life—placing child-rearing squarely upon the shoulders of the parents and requiring trained intelligence to be exercised by the parents.

Jehovah's Witnesses teach their children from the diaper stage that the highest aspiration in life is to become qualified for the Christian ministry.

"I have arrested youths of many different faiths, but I have yet to find a Witness among them," John Kuiper, police chief at Pipestone, Minnesota, told the Milwaukee Sentinel.

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CONGREGATIONS OF Jehovah's Witnesses are established for the purpose of preaching.

Hence, it is the territory itself that determines the location and composition of the congregation.

A city is divided up into small maps of about 200 to 300 homes to the territory.

A congregation is established in the midst of a community of such territories. Each member takes out one or more territories, making himself responsible for 1,000 or more of the populace, and seeks his own new congregation by house-to-house search.

As a rule, not more than 150 Witness ministers compose a congregation, as this number is adequate to serve the average community of territories within convenient reach of a Kingdom Hall.

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FOR EXAMPLE, in New York's Harlem district congregations are organized, not with regard to race but to territory.

In some Harlem congregations the majority of the Witnesses may be white but congregational overseers and their assistants are appointed without consideration of race or color.

Other Harlem congregations are more colored than white, with whites serving as overseers only if they qualify Scripturally.

Whether white, black, red, yellow or brown, all congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses are served by the same central Watch Tower society which provides the same educational program, facilities and services to all alike.

For this reason, in some areas where there is a large colored population, an entire congregation may be colored.

However, this does not alter the basic organization or operation of the congregation nor the manner in which the international headquarters staff deals with it.

Jehovah's Witnesses feel that the segregation that really counts is that which segregates the clergy above the laity. They have wiped out this distinction in their own ranks. First - century Christians all preached, they point out.

No paid ministry is tolerated by the Witnesses. The average congregation has seven overseers or servants. These are drawn from the ranks of the congregation.

An educated congregation can produce its own bishops (Greek, "overseers") and deacons (Greek, "ministerial servants"), they feel, because this is a Scriptural provision.

Just a part of the thousands of Witnesses who crowded Memorial Stadium last year during an eight-day meeting held in Baltimore. AT LEFT—a familiar scene on busy street corners all over the country, Jehovah's Witnesses passing out literature to passersby.

BAPTISM to Jehovah's Witnesses marks the date of their ordination as ministers. The scene is Milwaukee, Wis., where a mass baptism took place when the Witnesses met there in July, 1957.

Fastest Growing

"Jehovah's Witnesses," says Markus Bach in The Christian Century, "is the fastest growing religious faith in the world."

During a recent ten-year period they multiplied twice in North America, five times in Asia, seven times in Europe and Africa, and fifteen times in South America.

There are almost twice as many ministering Witnesses of Jehovah worldwide as there are Catholic priests.

There are more Witness ministers in the United States than all other clergy combined.

While orthodox clergy confess that they cannot, denominationally or collectively, reach 70 million Americans outside their churches, the Witnesses reach the equivalent of the national population at least once a year in personal visitations.

In the United States about 25 per cent of the Witnesses are colored. That means, on a national population basis, that colored people are flocking to Jehovah's Witnesses twice as fast as whites.

Just For Laffs

TEXAS TALES

In his will an oil-rich Texas man directed that he was to be buried in an air-conditioned Cadillac. The wish was carried out with the use of considerable machinery to lower the car into the deep hole.

Two Kansas travelers passing by at the time watched as the Cadillac was lowered into the huge grave.

"Imagine being buried in an air-conditioned Cadillac," one Kansan exclaimed.

"Yep," the other replied. "That's what I call livin'."

AFRO Magazine Section

THE NATION'S TOP

Basketball Players

If someone were to say to you that this year's college All-America in basketball might be made up in its entirety of colored players, what would you say?

I know. You'd probably think they were off their rocker, touched in the head or, to put it plainly, you'd think they were nuts!

Well, I'm all those things, I guess. For that's exactly what I'm saying to you as of this minute. And by the time you finish reading, you may at least admit I've made out a pretty good case.

By Sam Lacy

Elgin Baylor

Wilt Chamberlain

Guy Rodgers

This isn't to predict that such a turn of events is likely to come about — that the 1958 All - America will be all tan. This is to agree that it could be.

For instance, any of the so-called experts who starts naming a mythical "best" five with colored boys in the one, two, three and four places, would get by without undo criticism.

It isn't hard to find reasons for claiming that Wilt Chamberlain of Kansas, Elgin Baylor of Seattle, Oscar Robertson of Cincinnati, and Guy Rodgers of Temple, are the four finest college cagers in the country. And it might prove embarrassing for anyone trying to dispute such claim.

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CHAMBERLAIN, Baylor and Robertson are in a dogfight for highest scoring honors in the nation. All three are sporting averages of more than 30 points a game, and they are waging their private battle far out in front of the pack.

Consequently, the see-saw aspects of the thing that finds them trading the one-two-three places several times a week, bears little importance as to which is first at the moment. Nobody seems likely to catch them as long as they remain healthy.

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CHAMBERLAIN tallied 800 points in 27 games last year for a 29.6 average (fourth best in the nation).

He otherwise geared the Kansas quint to second place in national ranking, being the main cog in a machine that won 27 and lost three.

Because of him, the Jayhawks lost those three games by a total of only five points! Iowa State beat them, 39-37; Oklahoma A and M won, 56-54, and North Carolina's national champions, edged them, 54.53, in three overtimes.

Baylor was equally important to the Seattle team. And in some respects, the former Washington, D.C. schoolboy sensation enjoyed an even better season than his Philadelphia counterpart.

Elgin nipped Wilt in shooting percentage with a 29.7 for 25 games. He, too, paced his team to 24 victories in 27 starts. And Baylor led the entire nation in rebounds, grabbing 538 off the boards — more than 21 per game.

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THAT BOTH have taken up where they left off, is evident in the earlier revelation here that Chamberlain, Baylor and the youthful Robertson are locked in the battle for scoring leadership for the first half of this season.

Robertson and Baylor, incidentally, showed their wondrous talents to the East this winter when they left amazed audiences with mouths agape at Madison Square Garden.

The former broke two all-time records at the Gotham sports palace when he tallied 56 points in leading Cincinnati to a 118-54 triumph over Seton Hall on January 9.

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ROBERTSON'S performance erased the 54-point high registered by Harry Boykoff for St. John's College (Brooklyn) in 1947.

It also eclipsed the field-goal record of 21 hung up by the great George Mikan for De Paul in 1945.

Oscar hit 22 field goals on his spectacular night on the Garden boards.

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AS FOR Baylor, he was one of two players chosen unanimously to the all - tournament five selected at the close of the famous Holiday Festival at the Garden during this year's renewal of the annual New Year's production.

The other unanimous pick was also singled out as the tournament's most valuable player.

So that brings us to the 6-foot captain of the classy Temple University quint, our No. 4 man in the All-America picture.

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GUY is not the terrifying point - maker to rank with Robertson, Baylor et al. But he belongs.

Dudley Moore, veteran coach of several national championship Duquesne University teams, calls Rodgers "the best little man in basketball today — college or pro."

After watching Guy in his Garden efforts last month, Coach Vince Boryla of the New York Knicks tabbed Rodgers as "on a par with Bob Cousy at a similar stage" in his career.

For the uninformed, it might be pointed out that Cousy is regarded as "Mr. Basketball" by followers of the pro game.

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RODGERS' forte is playmaking. He boasts a wonderfully analytical mind, and is a keen diagnostician with a tremendous faculty for anticipating evidence: his 185 assists in 29 games led the country last year.

But he can shoot, too, when occasion demands. Otherwise, how did he manage a 20.4 average on the scorebook in 1956-57?

Okay, then, we're acquainted with four young men who just may be the finest collegiate basketball players in the world.

No 5 could be one of a galaxy of superb tasters spread through the nation's college ranks.

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FOR INSTANCE, Bob Boozer, a 6-foot, 8-inch junior, is recognized all over the Midwest as the prime reason Kansas State University is the third ranking team in the U.S. as of this writing. So, there's Boozer as a candidate for No. 5.

(Continued on Page 2)

Oscar Robertson

CIAA All-Americans

The ranks of the predominantly colored college are stocked with a few All-America potentials.

Morgan State College, which has nurtured greats of professional football (Roosevelt Brown, Len Ford), and world record trackmen (George Rhoden, Josh Culbreath), may have a considerable talent in one of two currently outstanding cagers.

In homebred (Baltimore) Charley Brightful, the Bears boast a fine all-round performer whose versatility would perhaps amaze onlookers if he were given the exposure that goes to his counterparts at Kansas, Seattle, Temple, etc.

And in Ronnie Garner, Morgan has a scoring genius of remarkable consistency. This young Philadelphian wears a pair of the surest hands the writer has seen in 25 years on the basketball beat, and if he doesn't have all the shots it's because some new ones were invented since the last time the Bears played.

Texas Southern, the same school which produced the Warriors' Saulsberry, has a scintillating performer in Benny Swain. The same goes for Winston-Salem Teachers' College with its sharpshooting Wilfred John.

With a little more desire, Howard University's John Syphax would be worth a selector look.

Lack of size may discourage consideration of North Carolina College's Jim Sligh, but he is a classy, consistent performer nevertheless.

Tennessee State has a deadly scorer and expert playmaker in Dick (Skull) Barnett. So have Missouri Lincoln in George Pruitt, Fisk University in Bobby Gilliam, and Johnson C. Smith University in Cleveland Banks. And that's just brushing the surface.