Religion In Modern Life

Five decades later, American Muslims still going strong

By Eddie King
AFRO Staff Writer

It could have been because no one was taking the time to understand its philosophy about personal self worth or its aims toward collective fraternization of races in the Islamic faith, but whatever the reason, the American Muslim Mission has been and is still to some one of the most controversial religious organizations around.

There have been a lot of changes made within the organization within the last 50 years, changes that have caused unity on one hand and division on another.

These were major changes that influenced doctrinal beliefs and that changed philosophies and, of course, changes that were to work towards the good of the organization.

In the account of Muslim Brother Haneef Izzaldeen of the American Muslim Mission, when Master Fard, an Easterner, came to America in the early 1900's, he came recognizing that the strongest force in Afro-American people was Christianity.

There were immediate observations by Fard that it promoted black inferiority and economical oppression.

It was later his teachings to Elijah Muhammad, that launched a national recognition to what was to be the Nation of Islam that developed firmly around the very early 30's.

But with these teachings did not come so much a focus on religion, but more so a focus on a philosophy that promoted independence, a philosophy that was to stimulate blacks to get up and recognize their predicament.

In Izzaldeen's own words, it was a sort of group psychology that promoted "racism" and produced "radical" militant groups. "But most importantly, it was a psychology that appealed to blacks."

It was the death of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, who had become the world's recognized leader for the American's Nation of Islam, in 1975 that sparked a radical change in direction of the organization.

Under leadership of the son, Wallace D. Muhammad (presently the name has been changed to Warith), the organization changed its focus from the psychology to the actual study of Islamic religion doctrine.

It was through this study that philosophies began to change and along with those changes, the name of the organization. The new name became the World Community of Al-Islam in the West in the latter part of 1975.

With the name change were new focuses. According to new religious truths discovered through study of the doctrines, there could no longer be any restrictions to whites and other racial groups that wanted to be a part of the growing religious faith in America. The promotion of militarism was to be no longer, and the focus was to be on the betterment of all people.

"Black progress is a reality for us," said Izzaldeen, "but we don't limit our vision to being totally restricted to blacks."

There were some basic changes in spiritual beliefs too. One most stinging change was the recognition of there being no God but God or Allah. All referrals to God having come to earth through the body of a man were relinquished.

Lewis Farrakhan, who had been a staunch follower of Elijah Muhammad, according to Izzaldeen, did not agree with the new doctrinal and philosophical changes and eventually with a loyal group of followers separated from the organization to begin another more dedicated to those beliefs under the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

Some short years away in

Continued on page 13

Baltimore gets first gospel supper club

By Eddie King
AFRO Staff Writer

Right in the middle of the move towards liberated Christian activities in the Baltimore/Washington region like gospel skating, gospel bowling and gospel competitions, the area now has its first gospel supper night club in Baltimore.

Located 5430 Park Heights Ave., the elaborately decorated, plush dining facility is aimed at being the spot for Christians with its entertainment line-up of singers from Julius Brockington to Tramaine Hawkins and Myrna Summers.

The setting, of course, is as a dinner theatre mixed in with a little night clubbish spillover. The dining area before the stage seats 250 people comfortably.

"It's just an attempt to cater to the Christian needs," explains founder of the idea, Jason Saunders. "For people like my father maybe or my grandmother who want to go out like other people and not to some jazz or disco club, it's designed for them."

"This is the first of its kind in the Baltimore or Washington area. There are other clubs of the sort in other cities. They're doing really well."

Boasting of the diversified menu, restaurant manager Hannibal Mickens says he is proud of the established black owned business.

"This is excellent for the area, considering there being a large religious community here. And we will be able to compete against other quality services."

The Gospel Supper Club will also be a caterer. It will be a host site for religious affairs and banquets. Managers see the opportunity as limitless.

"We're in a marketplace to attract business from everybody, but we make it clear that the church is our priority. We want to be their market," insists Mickens. "Washington's Northwest Gardens or Baltimore's Blue Crest North will have nothing on us."

Right down to the most social of affairs, the club enforces strict business rules applicable for the church environment. There are absolutely no alcoholic beverages sold at all for example.

The Grand Opening for the club is scheduled for September 15 at Baltimore/Washington area. 7:30 p.m. featured guest for the occasion will be Grammy Award Nominee Vanessa Bell Armstrong in concert. Attending will be host MC's from the Baltimore/Washington area.

After the Sept. 15 opening restaurant / club hours will be open every Saturday and Sunday from 7-2 a.m. along with a regular weekday schedule.

The club will feature local artists as well as international artists on a regular basis.

The club is now opened daily from 11-3 p.m. on weekdays and on Sundays from 2-8 p.m.

AFRO Photos by Paul A. Greene

THIS IS IT /.. the night spot for Christians. Manager Hannibal Mickens poses in new Gospel Supper Nightclub where diners are entertained by live religious music.

Fountain Baptist men rededicate themselves

When the men of Fountain Baptist Church celebrate their 49th Annual Men's Day this year, they will be celebrating a very rich history of male participation in the growth and development of the 82-year-old church.

To show that the activeness of their gender is still going strong in the church, the men are rededicating themselves to their own devoted mission of upkeeping Fountain Baptist.

On September 2, 4 p.m., the first of a series of services leading up to Men's Day will be held at the church, 1215 E. Monument St. At this service the men will rededicate themselves to their cause.

Rev. H. Beeches Hicks, Jr., pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church in D.C. will be the guest speaker for the occasion.

It is not unusual to expect a lot of work out of the men at Fountain. They have earned the respect given them.

While they acknowledge the utmost of respect for their fellow women workers who work just as hard, men at Fountain have taken on several tasks to strengthen the church family and role of the church.

It is they who are responsible for, in most instances, visiting the sick, the elderly and shut-in. It is they who transport members back and forth to church, make minor repairs in homes of other members and participate in national and regional conventions.

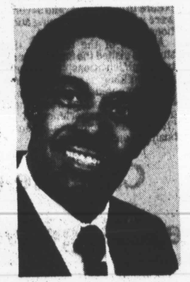
"I've been pastoring for over 25 years," said Pastor Herman Ford. "This is the best group of men I've ever pastored. They are the most cooperative, the most Christian and the most willing to do what the church needs done, and they are very liberal financially."

When the men rededicate themselves this Sunday, they will enlargen their goals and increase their tasks. "We're rededicating ourselves to do bigger and better things," remarked Al Bagley, spokesman for the men.

Men at Fountain number close to 200. They have established some of their own orders besides being dominant on the Deacon Board and making up most of the Trustee Board. The men's Male Chorus is hinted at being one of the best around.

"These are some good men here at Fountain," concludes Rev. Ford, "They really have an idea of what the church is about. It's just not looked at as a building within itself, but they see it as an arm that reaches out into the community."

More than 150 men are expected at the rededication service Sunday.



Rev. H. Beecher Hicks, Jr.

Singers sponsor dinner

The King David Singers are presenting a dinner-concert tonight, Friday, August 24, 7:30 p.m. at Martin's West (Exit 17, Beltway) for the benefit of the Baltimore Rescue Mission.

The mission is an organization that houses, feeds and clothes "street people" at no cost. Presently the mission is in desperate need of $6,000 to cover expenses to clear building violations.

The event, one of many sponsored by the singers, will feature the group in concert along with special guest appearances by the Followers of Christ and other local artists.

"This is our way of being conscious and aware of what the Word tells us to do," said Rufus Langston, spokesperson for the group. "We've had special fundraising programs each year for organizations in need."

Some 1400 people are expected at the $25 affair. Several organizations and businesses have even bought tables to help make the venture a success. For further information about the affair, call 426-1298.

AT LAST—42 years later, Bishop Edward G. Carroll, Sr. poses in front of Morgan Christian Center he help found.

Morgan Christian Center gets new director

By Eddie King
AFRO Staff Writer

The Morgan State University Christian Center has a new leader.

But really it is somewhat inappropriate to describe Bishop Edward G. Carroll, Sr. as someone new to the Christian Center. He was one of the people who helped found the center some 43 years ago.

Bishop recalls quite a few of the incidents that led to the development of such a center.

"We were a small college then," he said. "But there was a great deal of enthusiasm among denominations about a center that would be ecumenical. It was to be a center of worship, for group experiences and discussions, even a place for creative recreation."

Bishop Carroll, then a professor of Religion and Philosophy at Morgan, and others interested in the establishment of the center, approached the school's Board of Trustees who gave their approval.

A Board of Directors for the center was formed and a few short years later, the center was

Continued on page 13

—Metro Briefs—

Epworth U.M. Hyatt Regency

This Sunday, Aug. 26, the Epworth United Methodist Chapel family will salute Dr. Woodie White on his promotion to the episcopacy of methodism—a bishop. The event will be at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, 300 Light St. For additional information call 944-1070.

Bethel A.M.E.

Rev. John R. Bryant will be the speaker for the week of the 27 through the 31 at the Bethel A.M.E. Church Ministerial Staff Crusade beginning 7:30 p.m. nightly. Bethel is located, 1300 Druid Hill Ave.

Mt. Olivet Freewill

The Baltimore Civic Interest Group will honor Elder Marvin C. Moore Christian and community leader, on Fri., Aug. 31, 7 p.m. at the Mt. Olivet Freewill Baptist Church, Fremont Ave. and Saratoga St.

Simmons Memorial Baptist

The Majestic Choral Ensemble will be in concert at Simmons Memorial Baptist Church, Pennsylvania Ave. and Cumberland St., on Friday, Aug. 31, 8 p.m.

New Psalmist Baptist

The Social Action Committee of the New Psalmist Baptist Church, Franklin and Cathedral Sts., will be sponsoring their first annual "Back to School" Dental Screening on Sept. 1 from 11-1 p.m. $5.

St. James U.M.

The Methodist Men of St. James are sponsoring a Prayer Breakfast on Sept. 1, 8 a.m., with Bishop Edward Carroll, Sr. as the speaker. St. James is located at Monroe and Lexington Sts.

Leadenhall Baptist

Rev. Mrs. Florence Alcorn will be in concert at Leadenhall Baptist Church, 1021 Leadenhall St., on Sun., Sept. 2, 3:30 p.m. For further info. call 566-7255.

St. Barthlomew

St. Battholomew's Church, 4711 Edmondson Ave., will hold its Annual Flea Market on Sat., Sept. 8 from 9-2 p.m.

Denton, Md.

A musical program featuring Rev. F.C. Barnes and Janice Barnes, the Mighty Stars of Joy and the Unlimited Gospel Singers will be held in Cambridge, Md. at the Caroline County 4-H Park in Denton on Wed., Sept. 12, 7 p.m. $4.50.

Sharp Street U.M.

Men's Day at Sharp Street United Methodist Church, Dolphin and Etting Sts., will be Sun., Sept. 16 at 8:30 and 10 a.m. service.

Charity Club

Going to Lancaster, Pa. is the Friendly J.P. and L. Charity Club on Sat., September 15, on a shopping spree. For further info. call Cora Vaughn 728-3908.

LaFonte Rouge

Elder James E. Wills, Sr. will be receiving his Doctor of Divinity on Sept. 20 formally at a commencement dinner in his honor at the LaFontaine Rouge.

Epworth U.M.

The Morgan State University Choir will be in concert at the Epworth United Methodist Church, Liberty Rd. and St. Lukes Lane, in Baltimore County on Sunday, Sept. 30, 4 p.m. For further info. call Sandra Ferguson at 944-1070. $5.

Wilson Park C.C.

First Annual Women in White Service at the Wilson Park Christian Community Church, 4629 York Rd., will be held Saturday, Sept. 29, 7 P.m. Guest speaker for the occasion will be Rev. Barbara Sands.

Metro church briefs

St. Matthews U.M.

Rev. St. George Cross and the members of St. Matthews United Methodist Church, 416 E. 23rd St., invite you to attend a great satellite camp meeting tonight (Aug. 24) through Sun., Aug. 25 beginning 7:30 p.m. nightly.

Patterson Park
The East Baltimore Church

of God plans a black Gospel concert in Patterson Park this Saturday, Aug. 25 with nine of Baltimore's top groups and soloists. Included are the Gideon Singers, Pam Yerby, St. Abraham Baptist Choir, Abdul Debravo and others. The concert will begin at 6 p.m.

Trinity Baptist
Trinity Baptist Church

Choirs and the Fernando Allen Singers will hold a special summer concert on Sun., Aug. 26, 5 p.m. at the church, 1601 Druid Hill Ave.

Ames U.M.

100 Women in White at Ames United Methodist Church, Carey and Baker Sts., on Sun., Sept. 16, 3 p.m. For further info. call Ethel Bell 523-8747.

Bethel AME

Bethel A.M.E., 1300 Druid Hill Ave., is having an annual Labor Day Sunrise Service on Monday, Sept. 3, 6 a.m. At this special service, needs of needy families will be attempted to be met with clothes and shoes and the likes.

Cross Testimonial

A Testimonial Appreciation Banquet in honor of Rev. St. George Cross will be held Thursday, SePtember 13 at the LaFontaine Bleu, 3120 Erdman Ave. For further info. call 366-9055.

New Psalmist Baptist

New Psalmist Baptist Church, Franklin and Cathedral Sts., is sponsoring its initial celebration and banquet to benefit its Christian School on Friday, Sept. 14, 7 p.m. at the Forum, 4210 Primrose Ave.

Elder James Land

Elder James Land died August 5 at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Born in Baltimore on May 30, 1932, he was a member of Holiness Church of Deliverance, 1401 Central Ave. until his death. Mr. Land is survived by his wife, Mrs. Hattie Land; one brother, Thomas Land; and a host of relatives and friends. Services were held Aug. 9 at Holy Trinity Church. Burial was in Arbutus Memorial Park.

—Morgan center

Continued from page 12

a reality.

"I would have liked to have been head of the center then, but the presiding Bishop (of the Methodist church) at the time thought that it would be best that an older person be appointed head of the center."

Now 43 years later after he has retired as an active bishop for the United Methodist Church, Bishop Carroll is heading the center as an interim director while Morgan directors look for a permanent replacement for Rev. Force.

"I'm retired now," indicates the Bishop, "but I promise to give the center the kind of direction it needs until a permanent person is found."

Bishop Carroll is scheduled to be the interim director until May 1985.

A native of Wheeling, WVA, the 71-year-old minister graduated from Morgan in 1930 from which he received an AB Degree. He later attended and graduated from Yale University and Columbia University/Union Theological Seminary receiving a BD and MA Degree.

He began teaching at the College in 1937, then a methodist related institution, and began directing the voluntary religious activity when the school was sold to the state.

Married to Phenola Valentine and the father of two children, Edward Jr., a public relations consultant and Nansi, music professor at the University of Florida, Bishop Carroll says he sees the center as being important on the campus of Morgan or any other educational institution.

"A university is made up of a multi-racial and religious group and the unity of the faith is expressed through a center like this. A center of the sort will help you in search for truth."

Services are held every Sunday morning at the Morgan Christian Center which houses a full sanctuary, kitchen, social parlors, library and classrooms.

A special worship service will be held this Sunday, August 26, 11 a.m. at the center for new students and parents and others who want to meet the new director. The Chapel Choir, under the direction of Magaret Lindsey, will sing for the occasion.

—Muslims

(Continued from page 12

1978, the organization changed its name again to the American Muslim Mission.

"The knowledge of the religion was becoming more clearer," explained Izzaldeen. "It expanded all religious responsibilities."

With an estimated close to 2 million followers in America, the American Muslim Mission is getting stronger everyday with new members and continuous religious education.

Five basic commitments are required of followers. There must be first a repeated admission that there is no God but God, a required five time a day prayer, a commitment to give in charity to those in need, a required 30 - day fast once a year (Ramadan) and to promise to take a journey to the Holy City of Mecca if it can be afforded.

Other expectations are also outlined. For example, it is expected that all followers will seek marriage.

There are rigid policies against smoking, drinking and eating certain foods like pork. The Honorable Warith Muhammad teaches "If the harm is greater than the benefit — leave it alone."

There are no requirements for name changes. It is quite optional to a follower. "(Name changes) identify us with a distinction and a wholesome way of life. Our name change reminds us of our dedication and responsibility to our way of living," said Izzaldeen.

The American Muslim Mission member does vote in political elections. Even though it is not a practice at some of the other Muslim organizations in the country, it is advocated among the American Muslims.

And like any religious group, there are numerous services performed by the organization for its members and the general public. There is a conscious effort to focus on needs and not wants, according to some Muslim brothers.

With a little more than 1,000 or so members in Baltimore, the American Muslims are quite active in their service to the community. They have two masjids (temples) in the city, in the 500 block of Wilson Street and the 1700 block of Dukeland St.

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Marion Curtis Bascom preaching
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— Good News — Traditional
11:00 — Behold Now, Praise the Lord — Everett Titcomb
— I've Been 'Buked — Arr. Hall Johnson

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