

# A NEW YEAR

## Year of progress for WCIW under Emam Muhammad's leadership

By Abdul Aleem Seifullah

In the early winter of 1977, Emam Wallace D. Muhammad, leader of the World Community of Al-Islam in the West, issued an emergency call for survival.

"I do not know if I will be successful or not, but I am going to ask our leaders to come together in an emergency meeting because our condition is just that bad," he said in reference to the adverse conditions that prey on the Bilalian community in the United States.

"I am issuing a national call for survival to all concerned leaders and to all concerned citizens of America. We are in the process of forming a group of such persons from all segments of the society who are ready to mobilize their forces against the common enemies of our communities," the WCIW leader said at that time.

By the year's end, several such meetings had occurred, much due to the efforts of Emam Muhammad and other concerned Bilalian leaders. Their concerns led to a meeting in December at the White House with President Jimmy Carter.

The meeting was important in that it provided Bilalian leaders an opportunity to impress upon the president their concern over the plight of troubled urban areas of the country and to learn of the administration's efforts in their areas of concern.

The White House meeting took on even added significance for Emam Muhammad and members of the WCIW, formerly the Nation of Islam. For the first time in the history of the organization the leader had been invited to meet with the president of the United States, a development few would have thought likely as recently as four years ago.

Commenting on an October dinner in New York in honor of General Olusegun Obasanjo, the Nigerian head of state, to which he had been invited by President Carter, Emam Muhammad noted, "What impressed

me most about the affair was that most of the leading representatives of the Bilalian community were present.

"It provided an opportunity for me to attend as an associate of theirs, which is something that I have wanted for a long time."

That statement by the WCIW leader and his participation with an organized broad spectrum of prominent Bilalian leaders was conclusive evidence to all of the evolution of the WCIW under the leadership of Emam Muhammad from the closed, secretive body it was characterized as prior to the Emam Muhammad's leadership, to a spotlight position of leadership.

And 1977 marked a year in which few leaders matched the initiatives of Emam Muhammad, the recognized mujaddid (reviver) of religion, in addressing the human problems that plague society and the world.

In the late spring of the year Emam Muhammad issued the historic demand for the removal of all racial images of Divine from worship.

"Don't you know it's time to tell the world not to look at Jesus as God and not to think that God can be crucified on a cross...Don't you know it is time to do this to save the world," he said.

"Racism," he said, "is in religion. Whenever a people give you their image to worship, racism is in that religion. But you haven't got the sense to see it."

Several Christian ministers and theologians at first took issue with Emam Muhammad's statement when he vowed to demonstrate and even picket those churches refusing to remove racial images of Divine from their institutions of worship. In the time that has since elapsed, many have come to share his point of view.

In cities throughout the country Muslims and Christian supporters have discussed the problems of racial images in worship and demonstrated for their removals through the Committee to Remove All Images of Divine (CRAID).



Emam Wallace D. Muhammad, leader of the World Community of Al-Islam in the West has left no stone unturned in seeking solutions and providing answers to human and societal ills.

(Photo by Wali Akbar Muhammad)

Emam Muhammad explained that he still sought closer ties and understanding with members of other religious faiths, but added, "...I never said that I would tolerate Caucasian images among us to reverence and worship..."

In further clarifying his position on racial images in worship, the WCIW leader said, "As long as (Caucasian) people think that their physical white image is in the world as the image of God, and as long as non-Caucasian people see and know that the Caucasian image is in the world as the physical image of God, there will be no real coming together and no peaceful meeting of the minds of Caucasians and non-Caucasians."

"The strongest wedge between non-Caucasians and Caucasians is a Caucasian image of God on the cross."

As for the correct and proper keys for human growth and development, the Emam intensified his teachings, begun three years ago when he

assumed the leadership after the passing of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Speaking to students at Chicago's University High School, Emam Muhammad taught how, "We are free. Our minds are free to take on any nature and religion is trying to preserve the best nature of human beings by telling us that God has designed in nature, the direct and safe path of human development for human survival, health, strength, peace, happiness, love, even heaven right on Earth in our lifetime."

The proper path—the Emam told the students, is through religion. The proper role of religion "is about saving the strength of the human society, saving the strength of the life."

Speaking further on the relationship of religion, freedom and proper human growth and development, Emam Muhammad told inmates at San Quentin Prison in

(Continued on page 18)