

Egyptian scholar: Bilalians anxious to learn Al-Islam

By Emam Khalil Abdel Alim

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to tell his followers that they would learn their language overnight—meaning they would learn Arabic and Al-Islam when it would be time to learn them, very quickly.

Today, under the leadership of his son, Emam Wallace D. Muhammad those followers now comprise the largest Muslim community in the Western Hemisphere, the World Community of Al Islam in the West (WCIC).

Emam Muhammad's leadership of the community into the way of Al-Islam, of the Quran, and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), is being admired, marveled at, applauded and assisted by Muslims the world over.

Teachers of Arabic, the Quran, the Hadith and the principles and practices of Al-Islam are offering their services to brothers and sisters in the West.

The education and inspiration has not been unilateral; the born Muslims from the East have been inspired by the enthusiasm of their American converted Muslim brothers and sisters.

This was pointed out by Dr. Gamal A. Badawi, who working with the Islamic Teaching Centers—a segment of the Muslim Student Association of America and Canada—was conducting Islamic classes with members of the WCICW in Chicago last week and will be traveling to other cities.

Dr. Badawi said in an interview, "I found the response and enthusiasm of the Bilalian Muslims much stronger than even among born Muslims who take Islam for granted, with some not as eager to learn and



DR. GAMAL A. Badawi (left) discussing point with an unidentified member of Masjid Elijah Muhammad No. 2.

(Photo by Wali Akbar Muhammad)

He also pointed out the unique position of Bilalians when he said, "A second reason is that they are in a better position to see more vividly the contrast between other religious beliefs and ways of life, and beliefs and practices of Islam.

"Some Muslims mix up and cause confusion between the true teaching

others have seen as a result of the teaching and inspiration of the Nation of Islam and Emam Wallace D. Muhammad, to inculcate a desire for learning among members of the WCICW.

"They have humility and an eager enthusiasm to learn. You see adults, professionals and even doctors, those



DARNELL KARIM, an Arabic language instructor, is also involved in the Islamic Studies Program at Masjid Elijah Muhammad No. 2.

(Photo by Wali Akbar Muhammad)

improve their practices of Islam."

When asked why this appeared to be the case, Dr. Badawi responded, "Many born Muslims are not truly aware of the treasure of the heritage they have, whereas for the Bilalian it is something new, something they are taking time and effort striving to learn."

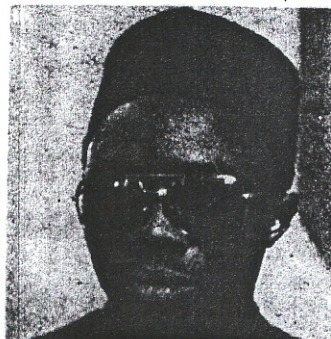


PROFESSOR MUHAMMAD Said Dabbas lends an invaluable, first-hand experience to the Islamic Studies Program.

(Photo by Darnell Karim)

of Islam and certain cultural practices that are mistakenly attributed to Islam. Some of them feel they know Islam and feel no need to improve on Islamic education. Bilalians on the other hand are studying Islam anew and are looking for authentic sources of Islam."

The Egyptian scholar noted what



SHEIKH AHMED Arrifai of Nigeria brings with him a background of extensive Islamic studies in Saudi Arabia.

(Photo by Wali Akbar Muhammad)

who have received the highest degree, so enthusiastic that they repeat ayats (verses) of Quran as you teach them."

He added that some people who feel well-versed in knowledge of Al-Islam will argue in the manner of Western philosophers—even on weak ground—with evidence from

the Quran and Hadith whereas, "In this, my first contact with Bilalian Muslims, my experience has been that when a Bilalian asks you questions on Islam and you give them an answer from the Quran and Hadith there is a spirit of acceptance—which enhances my conviction that to be a true Muslim it requires not just knowledge and intellectual cognition, more importantly it is the attitude of acceptance and loving submission to Allah."

Dr. Badawi who is an associate professor of business administration at St. Mary University and a resident of Halifax Nova Scotia, Canada—a native of Egypt—is volunteering his time to assist in Da'wah (spreading of Islam).

Dr. Badawi and his colleagues join the already well established Islamic Studies Program at the Honorable Elijah Muhammad Masjid.

READY TO TEACH

The department has a well planned curriculum of study designed to teach and train Bilalians to live and teach Al-Islam.

Involved in the department is Emam Darnell Karim who serves as an Arabic language instructor. He began learning Arabic in the University of Islam established by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad where he was a classmate of Emam Wallace D. Muhammad.

Also instructing are Sheikh Ahmed Arrifai of Nigeria, who has studied Al-Islam extensively in Saudi Arabia, and Professor Muhammad Said Dabbas of Syria.

These brothers have been teaching Arabic, Quran, Hadith, Salat and other principles of Al-Islam for several months. The enthusiastic reception that Badawi received is in part due to their teaching.

All of these brothers exemplify in this work the spirit in Al-Islam of sharing what knowledge one has for the benefit of the community.

When asked about the role of members of the World Community of Al-Islam in the West within the universal Muslim movement, Dr. Badawi replied, "This role could be quite significant for a number of reasons.

"They can give inspiration due to their serious commitment to Allah and the cause of Islam. Their speed of learning—because they are so interested—is a good example. In Islam, there is a dire need for learned and committed du'ah (workers)."

INVITERS TO PEACE

He strongly added: "There should be systematic efforts to provide training for Bilalians to enable them to revive Islam, to even call other apathetic Muslims or misguided Muslims back to true Islam, as well as inviting new people to Islam."

This bears witness to the role Emam Wallace D. Muhammad has taught members of the WCICW in that they must fulfill a community commitment and be as Bilal, the first Muzzin, calling all people to prayer.

Dr. Gamal Badawi said that "With both commitment to and knowledge of Islam, the Bilalians should be in a better position to spread Islam because of their proficiency in the English language and their familiarity with the social and cultural background of Western people."