

Muhammad Says Whites 'Not Rushing To Become Members'

Muslims, but you know that the Hon. Elijah Muhammad never accepted the term Black Muslim.

"So there must be a reason for his not accepting that term. So the language of the Nation of Islam is a very strange language. It's a spiritual language. One would almost have to be a scholar in scriptural languages to understand what the Hon. Elijah Muhammad meant when he said white devil?"

Today, Wallace assured, it is as easy for a white person to join the Nation of Islam as it is for a Black. "There's no restrictions now on race; anyone can join. No problem."

And even more significant, JET learned that non-Black members are not restricted from involvement in Muslim leadership. This includes their "right" to become ministers. As Muhammad explained, "Membership is open and they have the same rights as anyone else." And no one should even be surprised to see whites selling the Muslim's Muhammad Speaks newspaper in public parking lots and on street across the nation.

Although the "doors to the church" are wide open, one couldn't say that a multitude of whites is standing in line, anxiously awaiting admittance.

In fact, Muhammad said, "I don't see any rush of Caucasians to become members of the Nation. There have been a few. In fact, there are some registered now I understand. We had two visit us (in Chicago) last Sunday. When the minister opened the meeting

for visitors to register. I understand that two white men stood up."

But while the policy of integrating the religion had been accepted, the concept of interracial marriage among Muslims still raises eyebrows.

"Well, interracial marriage is not a color problem," Muhammad said. "I would say it's a rational problem. It's what's best for you."

"And it's the belief of not only myself, but Muslims throughout the world. Throughout the Muslim community, they feel, we feel, that the best family life is when two couples from the same community join to form the family, and that there is less chance for success when the members of one community go outside that community and get someone from another community."

"Here, you don't have as much in common with each other. So, among many other problems there is going to be criticism. It makes for more problems. Why ask for more problems?"

If a minister of the Nation of Islam wanted to marry a white woman, would Muhammad personally object to it?

"If I thought that his decision wasn't the decision of a mature Muslim, then I would try to reach him," he answered. "But if I thought that his decision was well thought out, and that it was a good decision, I wouldn't question it."

It was pointed out to the supreme minister that many Blacks

in the U. S. have looked up to the Nation of Islam with overwhelming approval and have drawn encouragement from it because it was a large, disciplined organization that uplifted Blackness. Now, with these policy changes, the membership on the Black community's "Muslim bandwagon" will inevitably decline with many Muslim supporters feeling that their heroes have let them down.

Muhammad responded: "If the Black community's thinking moves like a vehicle, you know, the majority will be moving along with that vehicle. The vehicle can be going in the right direction for a long time, and at some point it might not be as beneficial for that vehicle to stay on that course, and when someone says turn the vehicle to the left or to the right, naturally those people on that vehicle without any prior notice change; their minds will continue to flow in that original direction."

"So this is what is happening in the Black community. We have people who have been thinking on one direction and they have been thinking that way for so long until it has become habit thinking."

"They haven't been searching to see if this is the best answer for us, if we are seeing this thing as it should be seen."

Muhammad said the Muslim position on race makes the Nation "Blacker than it was before." He said once Blacks understand the devil as an idea, "as a mentality

ruling this society, then they stop having primitive fears." He explained that once Blacks understand that God is not allowing whites to rule, Blacks will get up and go to school and get the knowledge needed to compete with whites.

"When they say don't let whites come into the temple, much of this is fear that if whites are allowed to come, we won't be able to compete with them," he observed. "I know we can compete with them, not only compete with them, we can lead them."

Besides the decision to allow whites to become members of the Nation of Islam, Wallace D. Muhammad has made other major changes. One is the transferring of Minister Abdul Farrakhan, the Nation's national spokesman, from Temple No. 7 in New York City to Chicago. Muhammad explained the move.

"Now some of the things that

Spokesman Farrakhan (l) introduces Muhammad to politician at McCormick Place. Farrakhan moved to Chicago headquarters from New York.

