



RELIGION

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Muslims choose Imam

by Shaheed Haamid

Long gone are the days when the leaders of the American Muslim Mission, formerly the Nation of Islam, are hand picked and presented to the membership on a silver platter.

Today, under the bold leadership of Imam Warith Deen Muhammad, the American Muslim Mission has made great strides toward true Islamic democracy.

The proof of these statements were clearly evident on the evening of August 20th, 1984, when members of the AMM in Portland, Oregon, elected Al-Hajji Muhammad Najieb Resident Imam of the Portland AMM community.

The election was held due to the resignation of Mikal H. Shabazz while performing the Jumulah (Friday) service on August 3rd.

Shabazz has served as Resident Imam for 7 1/2 years and cited personal reasons for vacating the post.

"The election represents order and direction on the part of this community," former Imam Shabazz said following the election of Najieb, "I support the community's choice," he added.

The newly elected Imam Najieb currently serves as coordinator of "Imam W.D. Muhammad Speaks," the American Muslim Mission's radio broadcast, heard every Sunday evening at 8 p.m. over KBOO, a non-commercial listener-supported

radio station serving Portland and surrounding areas, a position Najieb has held for nearly five years. He is also a member of KBOO's Board of Directors. Shaheed Haamid, also of the AMM in Portland, will succeed Imam Najieb as coordinator of the widely acclaimed national broadcast "Imam W.D. Muhammad Speaks."

"I look at it as a challenge," Imam Najieb said in reference to his new obligations as resident Imam.

The election, the first since the evolution of the Nation of Islam to the American Muslim Mission, is indicative of the growth of the AMM as an enlightened sophisticated community under the guidance and independent leadership of Imam Warith Deen Muhammad, according to the newly elected Imam.

"Before, the leadership of the community was in the hands of ministers of the Nation of Islam," Imam Najieb said, "now, the leadership of the community is where it belongs, in the hands of the people—the community as a whole."

Al-Hajji Imam Muhammad Al-Najieb became a member of the American Muslim Mission in 1968. He performed Hajj in 1978 and has an impressive record of accomplishment and dedicated service in the cause of Al-Islam in America.



(l-r) Newly elected Imam (leader) Al-Hajji Muhammad A. Najieb and the new coordinator of "Imam W.D. Muhammad Speaks," Shaheed Haamid. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Upon being elected Resident Imam of the AMM in Portland, Imam Najieb said his first priority is the education of the youth. "But," he said, "there will be heavy emphasis placed on boosting member-

ship and ownership in this area." Imam Najieb, with his devoted wife Nadira Islam, has four children ranging in ages from 9-2 years; Muhammad Hasan, Nadira Sudan, Nasir Hadi and Shakir Haneef.

Grotto breakfast offered

The first annual Grotto Pancake Breakfast will be held at The Grotto, The National Sanctuary of Our Sorrowful Mother, Sunday, September 16, from 8 a.m. to noon.

All the pancakes you can eat will be offered for \$2 for adults and \$1 for children. Bacon or sausages and eggs will also be served.

The event is being held to raise funds for operations and main-

tenance of The Grotto. Sunday Masses are scheduled for 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and noon. The noon mass will be held outdoors.

A special breakfast area will be set up in The Grotto's office area parking lot at 8840 N.E. Skidmore. The area is immediately east of the main entrance at 85th Ave. and Sandy Blvd.

Ron Herndon interview—the road from here

Part Two of a two-part interview with Ron Herndon, co-chair of the Portland Black United Front.

by Nathaniel Scott

Herndon's road from here points straight ahead. Commitments leave little time to enjoy family, or to indulge in the passion of reading. "The arena has changed." The application of ideas are more political. Strides have now become organizing and addressing national concerns, and "serving" extends itself to Oregon's Rainbow Organizing Committee.

"If I ever felt that running for political office would allow me to discuss issues that would bring about change, or inspire more (Black) people to get involved; (and) if I ever felt that a (political) race would allow me to do those things, (then) I would get involved (in a political race)," Herndon said, adding, "in the past, I ruled out politics; but not now."

Herndon's influence encompasses more than the BUF, he is sought out to speak on both local and national

issues, and when he attended the National Democratic Convention, he admits to broadening his political savvy. He also admits to conversing with delegates and leaders from across the nation. And now that the latest political marathon is gearing up at City Hall, some people are asking: "Will Herndon seek that office?"

Herndon smiled when the question was posed to him, and said, "I am supporting (Herb) Cawthorne. I think he has demonstrated his ability to win a city-wide race." Cawthorne's position on the school board was gained through a city-wide election. However, Herndon's vision is clouded by another divide-and-conquer atmosphere brewing on the political horizon.

Reportedly, there are five Blacks, seriously contemplating Commissioner Charles Jordan's soon-to-be-vacant position on the City Council which could lead to the identical fate Blacks suffered in the first District 18 race. Herndon said he would be meeting and talking with some of the proposed can-

didates. In the meantime, the 38-year old father of two, a son and a daughter, is being soft spoken about his future plans.

On the other hand, he is aware of, and recognizes his community leadership role, and bears the burden of that commitment with utmost grace.

"I am very proud of it (the leadership role) and grateful for it," he said. "I can't say that strongly enough," he added. "It's one of the highest honors I've received."

To illustrate and to place emphasis on his point, he talked about the obligation he felt towards the many hundreds of people who have responded to his many calls to march and demonstrate. He spoke of his heart-felt thanks; the obligation he feels, when he recalls that he was selected to be a delegate to the National Democratic Convention.

"It was an honor for me to go," he said. "I went down there (to San Francisco) representing 36,000 people in Oregon. It was an honor for me to be among that gathering."

Herndon said he came away from the convention "thoroughly convinced that you will have to get people involved in politics who care about people." He maintains that some people do and some don't. He knows that the mind is strong but the flesh is weak; that man's greed often leads him to act contrary to avowed promises.

"I still think it's possible for the Democrats to win. Reagan is voluble on the issues," Herndon said. "Mondale will have to reach some accord with Rev. Jesse Jackson; not because he is Jesse Jackson, but because 85 percent of

the Blacks voted for him." He added, "I am not prepared to risk Reagan having four more years in the White House."

On the local front, Portland, Herndon said, "Jobs for our (Black) community and education are the most critical issues. Jobs need to be created in and out of the community," he added, "I am glad Ivancie lost the election; he was not addressing the issues. I hope Bud Clark does not commit the same mistake," he said.

For the present, Herndon plans to be active in the role of co-chairman of the local BUF chapter, and the BUF will continue to be vocal and active in its avowed purpose of bringing about resolutions to Black issues, he said. In the past, the BUF has been accused of using "confrontation" tactics, "but in every case we started out talking. Confrontation is made to appear when Black people use it, like they are being irrational, emotional, and violent. America was built upon confrontation," he added. "They (the founding fathers) didn't talk the British out of this country; they didn't talk the Indians out of this land; and, they certainly didn't talk us (Blacks) out of Africa."

The perception of the BUF has begun to change. More people and organizations are accepting the BUF's position on issues as people issues, Herndon said. "When we talked about police misconduct, that was not just a Black issue; many white people were affected." He enumerated on other issues: including welfare and education. He said, Ron Herndon has not changed, "the arena has."

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