

# Bahai's launch expansion

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*For Illinois...*

## Bahai's launch expansion

**WILMETTE.**—More than 500 Baha'is gathered at the Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette recently to launch a special five-year teaching and expansion program for Illinois.

The object of this new campaign will be to introduce the teachings of the Baha'i Faith to as many Illinois residents as possible, and to increase the size and number of existing communities.

The Baha'i plan for Illinois is part of a larger international five-year teaching and consolidation plan being conducted by Baha'is in more than 300 countries and territories of the world.

In this country, Baha'is in more than 6,000 communities are participating, under the

direction of the nine-member Baha'i National Spiritual Assembly, the highest administrative institution elected by Baha'is in the country.

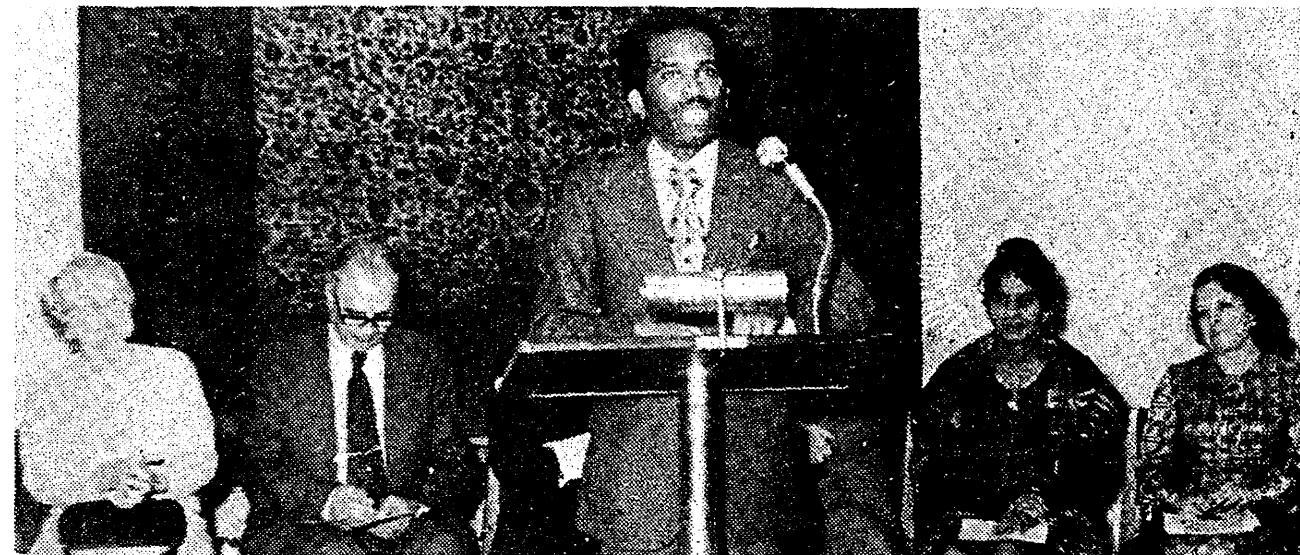
The National Spiritual Assembly, present in Wilmette for its monthly meeting, participated in the launching ceremony at the House of Worship. Among the current members of the National Assembly are Dr. Dorothy Nelson, dean of the Law School at the University of Southern California; Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh, professor of history at Yale; Dr. Daniel Jordan, professor of education at the University of Massachusetts; and the Assembly's chief executive officer Glenford Mitchell, former Assistant Editor of Africa Report magazine.

The Baha'i Faith has been established in Illinois for more than seventy years. The first mention of the Baha'i Faith in this country was made at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The first Baha'i in America, Thornton Chase, was a Chicago insurance broker.

The cornerstone of the famous Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette was laid in 1912 by 'Abdu'l-Baha, son of the Faith's Prophet and Founder. The structure, a symbol of the unity of mankind, is open to people of all religions for prayer and meditation. It was completed and dedicated to public use in 1953. More than 250,000 people visit the Temple every year.

Among the specific goals of the plan for Illinois are to raise the number of communities where Baha'is reside to at least 400 (there are Baha'is in 280 communities at this time); to have Baha'is living in every county; and to raise the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies, the basic administrative agency of the Baha'i Faith, to at least 99 (there are currently 43 Spiritual Assemblies in Illinois).

In the past decade the Baha'i Faith has grown more than sixfold in the United States alone. Youth in significant numbers have been attracted to the religion as a result of its progressive teachings, as have many minority people.



### *National secretary speaks...*

During a program including talks by a number of distinguished Baha'i teachers and administrators, Glenford Mitchell, secretary of the Baha'i National Spiritual Assembly, elaborates on the special plan for Illinois.

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