

Church

Muslim group has new goals and new style

Once known as the Nation of Islam, today's American Muslim Mission has changed to become an open community, and it carries a message of achievement through progress.

By William W. Sutton, Jr.
Inquirer Staff Writer

The Black Muslims are not that anymore. They are black and they are Muslim, but they now call themselves American Muslims.

The members of the Nation of Islam who

once aggressively hawked their national newspaper, Muhammad Speaks on busy city streets are members today of the American Muslim Mission. They still sell the newspaper, now called the A.M. (for American Muslim) Journal, but it is dis-

tributed at newsstands, not pressed into the palms of passers-by.

Today's Muslims have made major changes in their philosophy and style since Elijah Muhammad, founder of the Nation of Islam and its leader for 45 years, died in 1975.

His son Wallace Deen Muhammad, in the eight years since he assumed the roles of leader, president of the mission and Chief Imam, has significantly altered the group's direction from a closed

society for blacks only to an open community in which anyone who professes to be a Muslim is welcome. Under his leadership, the group's name was changed to World Community of Al-Islam in the West; two years ago, it became the American Muslim Mission.

Wallace Deen Muhammad came to Philadelphia yesterday morning. Mr. Muhammad, who heads the American Muslim Mission from its Chicago headquarters, is scheduled to speak on culture and economic development at 7 p.m. today at the Philadelphia Convention Hall, 34th Street and Civic Center Boulevard. The speech is free and open to the public.

Shamsud-Din Ali, Resident Imam of Philadelphia and regional leader, said he viewed the change as a "birth of common sense and right-mindedness" that made the group "a truly religious people."

"We really would like to make corrections where corrections are needed, and we believe that Wallace D. Muhammad is a leader who has made these

corrections in the Nation of Islam and brought them into the mainstream of society," he said in an interview this week.

The American Muslim Mission openly

"We love America," he said. "We believe that America (has) a great potential in this society."

Mr. Ali estimates that there are 30,000 Muslims of all sects in Philadelphia, South Jersey and Delaware, with 7,000 actively practicing Al-Islam at the city's nine mosques or masjids, their places of worship. Muslims at four of those masjids, he said, follow Wallace D. Muhammad and his teachings.

Other Muslim groups practice in the city and around the nation, including immigrant Muslims and other groups that had their origin in the Nation of Islam. But the American Muslim Mission is recognized as the largest Muslim community in the United States; its largest following is in Chicago, where it has about 500,000 members.

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accepts its American status, proclaims its faith in Al-Islam and asserts that it is on a mission to improve life in the United States, Mr. Ali said.

Church Moves To New Location

CHRIST UNIVERSAL CENTER OF TRUTH, with services formerly held in the Holiday Inn, South Strip, announced it has moved to its new permanent location at 900 E. Karen Avenue, Suite C210-212.

The Center, offering a New Thought Ministry, holds Sunday Services from 1 to 2 p.m. and Wednesday Services from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Its services can also be heard on KVOV Radio Sundays from 9:15 to 9:30 a.m.

The Christ Universal Center of Truth was founded and is ministered by Rev. Laura B. Butler.

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LIBRARIES DISCONTINUE FILM CO-OP

Due to federal budget cuts in the Library Services and Construction Act, the Nevada Library Media Cooperative will discontinue the circulation of its 16mm film collection to individuals or organizations effective June 2, 1983.

The cooperating libraries affected by the budget reductions include the Boulder City Library, Clark County Library District, Esmeralda County Community Libraries, Henderson District Public Library, Lincoln County Library, North Las Vegas Municipal Library and the Nye County Community Libraries.

For further information about the film cooperative, call your local branch library.