

"Unfettered search for truth"

Baha'i followers set out to cure the world

The York Baha'i club has weekly informal discussions in Ross, listed in the On Campus section. Dara Levinter reports on the Baha'i religion:

"Ye are all leaves of one tree and the fruits of one branch."
- Baha'u'llah

Baha'u'llah means "The glory of God"; Baha'i is the religion of the followers of that glory.

Their goal is the oneness of mankind - a realized need for collective security and established universal peace; and their aim is "to produce a world civilization which will in turn react on the character of the individual".

The words are those of Shogi

Effendi, Baha'u'llah's great-grandson, who died in 1957. Speaking on the world order, Effendi outlined the social principles inherent in this ideal:

"The Baha'i faith recognizes the unity of God and of his prophets; upholds the principle of an unfettered search after truth; condemns all forms of superstition and prejudice; and teaches that the fundamental purpose of religion is to promote concord and harmony, that it must go hand in hand with science, and that it constitutes the sole and ultimate basis of a peaceful, ordered and progressive society.

"It inculcates the principle of equal opportunity, rights and privileges for both sexes, advocates compulsory education, abolishes ex-

tremes of poverty and wealth, exalts work performed in the spirit of service to the rank of worship, recommends the adoption of an auxiliary international language, and provides the necessary agencies for the establishment and safeguarding of a permanent and universal peace".

The last of these aims was realized in 1963, the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Bah'i religion, with the establishment of the Universal House of Justice.

It is now the central organ of the Baha'i cause and representation of its members' discovery of the truth that man can learn to live in harmony.

In this light, the Baha'i religion does not invalidate preceding religions, but rather regards them "as different stages in the eternal history and constant evolution of one religion, divine and indivisible, of which it itself forms but an integral part".

This realistic and honest approach to its philosophy could very well be the reason for the rapidly increasing attraction of the Baha'i religion.

Its membership has risen since 1957 from 4,200 to its present 54,102, with over 150 schools and institutes

in nearly 320 countries and territories. Their literature is translated into 567 languages.

Through this constant struggle towards creating a universal community, the Baha'i faith has become more able to demonstrate its principles by actually living them.

Shogi Effendi wrote that "the principle of the oneness of mankind implies an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced".

However, the religion itself is imbued with an energetic optimism

which brings this change nearer to its followers' reach—a hope expressed by Effendi's predecessor, Abdu'l-Baha:

"This is a new cycle of human power. All the horizons of the world are luminous, and the world will become indeed as a garden and a paradise.

"It is the hour of unity of all the sons of men and of the drawing together of all races and all classes... and by the will of God the Most Great Peace will come; the world will be seen as a new world, and all men will live as brothers."

Beltrame elected editor

"I promise you one thing. I won't print silly letters."

With this threat, Julian W. Beltrame, erstwhile news and feature writer, took over the editorship of Excalibur for the 1975-76 year.

Beltrame, who has tracked down everything from a theatre showing Chinatown to minutes of the food services committee for Excalibur, was selected by the staff from among five candidates for editor.

The position is a full-time one, and involves 85 hours a week, with time out for meals.



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CPRI is a non-profit, non-governmental, citizen-supported research and educational action organization.

For more information or application forms, contact Scott Seymour, summer schools in peace research, 23 Dundana Avenue, Dundas, Ontario.

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