

Herbert Turner

Side 1:

[1/1] He was born in 1925 in Ridgecrest, NC, McDowell County. Went to school in Black Mountain, Birmingham and Knoxville and traveled.

[1/17] He was brought up a Baptist and until he was 17 thought Christianity was the only religion in the world. In the Navy he began to think about "God's people not being lost."

[1/29] After military service he worked for three years as a medical technician and studied other religions on his own.

[1/48] He and his wife were living in the Beaverdam area when, in 1962 his wife told him about a radio announcement about a meeting given by Dr. Bill Tucker to hear the will of God. He was skeptical but, when it was again announced, he went to 38 Crocket Ave on October 31, 1962 and talked with Tucker from 8:30 to midnight. His wife began attending meetings and they seriously thought of joining the faith with Bill and Bunny. When nine people over the age of 21 accept the Baha'i faith, there is a local Spiritual Assembly. He wanted to be the ninth and joined April 6, 1964. His wife had joined in March (see enclosure). His son and daughter are also members - Donna in 1964 and Herb in 1969. [Mary Sue Turner, William Tucker, Mrs. Bernice Tucker, Donna Wrenn Turner Turpin, Herbert Turner II]

[1/84] Both the Asheville and Buncombe County assemblies are going strong. Resources are limited because only Baha'i members can donate. Only the administrators are paid. There is no clergy.

[1/110] The Supreme Body is in Israel on Mt. Carmel (see enclosure).

[1/139] Once a year in the US there is a National Spiritual Assembly in Wilmette, IL, where delegates are elected to attend the meeting in Haifa, Israel (see enclosure).

[1/161] Today there are 165 national Spiritual Assemblies and thousands of local Spiritual Assemblies

[1/188] Bahá'u'lláh, founder of the faith, was born in Persia in 1817, a direct descendent of Abraham through this 3rd wife. The Báb announced the appearance of the messenger of God and was executed (see booklet "The Baha'i faith").

[1/215] During the last 100 years the faith has gone around the world and is second only to Christianity in terms of localities where it exists.

[1/239] Because the Tuckers welcomed Blacks in their home, police were called and they were forced out of the house they were renting. They moved to East Asheville, near Haw Creek, and are no longer in town (see enclosure). [Bernice and William Tucker]

[1/305] Baha'is believe that every several hundreds of years manifestations of God come to the people.

[1/352] "The scriptures say, 'He would come as a thief in the night and the heavens would pass away and the elements would melt with fervent heat.' The thief has come and we have new heavens of understanding."

[1/369] "Everything changed from 1844 when the Báb (forerunner) announced the mission" - telegraph, airplanes, submarines, advances in medicine. "Soon the present day order will be rolled up and a new one spread out in its stead."

[1/404] "Bahá'u'lláh said the earth is one country and mankind its citizens. Skin is the least of differences between people.

[1/442] The Baha'is visit other churches, they don't focus on Blacks but on humanity.

[1/461] There were 4 Blacks and 5 Whites in the first local group in 1964. There are 8 children in his family and some of his brothers and sisters disapproved of what he was doing. When a photo appeared in the paper with Jack (Black) and him, he got "static" from his family. [Jack Guillebeaux]

[1/540] Baha'is do not reject Christ, they accept all manifestations. In the past 150 years between 5 and 6 million people have joined the faith. In the first 300 years, Christ had only 50,000 followers.

Side 2:

[2/1] Bill was born in the Eastern part of the state. Bunny is from IL. He went to a school in optometry and came here in 1960 where he started teaching about Baha'i. The first Baha'i came from Canton. The Tuckers had firesides in their home on 38 Crocket Ave. [William Tucker, Bernice Tucker, Mr. Zim]

[2/25] Bill visited people here - attending churches and visiting patients. There were some newspaper ads and radio announcements. He invited people to come to his house from Warren Wilson College and Greenville, S.C. Funds were non-existent but the news was passed by word of mouth (see enclosure - handwritten history).

[2/37] The momentum increased. Bill gave a talk each Friday night. Finally there were eight members. Herb wanted to be the 9th so, after Margaret signed he was called out of bed and the assembly was formed. Now the group could officially be a local Spiritual Assembly. [Margaret Greenly Peterson]

[2/69] The county groups meet in private homes. The Asheville group has the center (photo). There are feasts every 19 days, year round - spiritual, business, social.

[2/83] There are 9 holy days during the year. Christmas can be celebrated if people want to but the Baha'i emphasis is on the events in the life of Bahá'u'lláh.

[2/113] People from all faiths are welcome. However no groups teach in Israel at this point. If a Jew in Israel wanted to teach he would leave the country. Baha'is believe that Bahá'u'lláh is the return of the Lord of Hosts the Jews are looking for, "a thief in the night" but they don't realize it right now.

[2/135] Jews in Asheville are welcome to join "one shepherd, one fold."

[2/144] His family represents three generations in Asheville. Two granddaughters 17 and 19 years old are active. [Joy Turpin, Hope Turpin]

[2/157] In Western North Carolina there are about 200 members. The vast majority come from Christianity, a few from Muslim backgrounds.

[2/175] Programs are held across town. Speakers are available. Bill was asked to speak at Givens Hall. [William Turpin]

[2/187] The group has social and economic projects. The Baha'i youth helped paint in a homeless shelter, go on hikes etc (see enclosure).

[2/216] Bahá'u'lláh wrote over 100 volumes of scripture in the 1860's, addressing all religious leaders and rulers. His message is moving along all over the world (see enclosures).

[2/231] Regarding controversial subjects:

1. There is no sanction about birth control.
2. They do not believe in abortion but don't carry banners.
3. They believe in chastity before marriage.
4. Violent people should be put away and, in time, a mandated death penalty for murder, rape and arson.
5. They are undecided about assisted suicide.

[2/346] In 1985 he presented a peace statement to the Mayor and City Council from the local Spiritual Assembly.

[2/375] His favorite theme is "progressive revelation," which is revealed periodically by manifestations of God. Every thousand years a great luminary arises - Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, the Báb, and in 1863 Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God made his declarations.