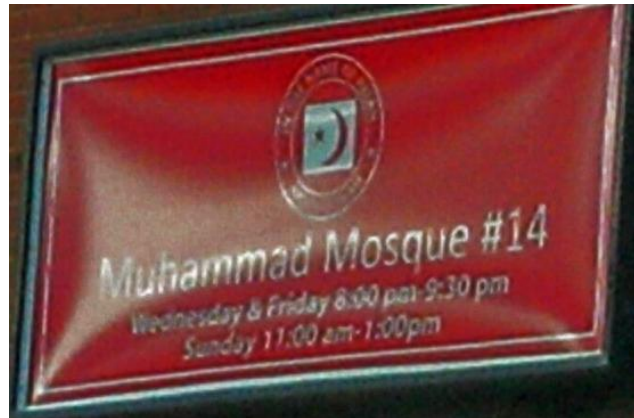


Exploring Asylum Hill –Pt 3 Islam at 210 Farmington Ave

The Nation of Islam, Muhammad Mosque #14 was located in Asylum Hill for many years beginning in the early part of this century. It is called “Mosque # 14” because it was the 14th Mosque that Malcolm X founded, this one in 1956. While it’s early years were spent mostly on Main St, at several different addresses and where it is now at 2550 Main St, for a lot of it’s time, Farmington Ave. was it’s home.



As Student Minister, Kelvin Lovejoy says “Our mission is to resurrect the consciousness and the spirit of the black man & woman here in North America, but really the world over... self-sufficiency, rooted in Islam, but with a Western expression ...The Five Pillars of Islam are the same, but the expression is different just as dialects in language or denominations in Christianity are different.”

So while the Muhammad Mosque #14 moved to 2550 Main St in 2016, the Masjid Salam was already there in a smaller space down the hall. They now have more space and several rooms to meet for prayers and study of the Koran.

Masjid Salam is a community of Muslim who are mostly are from West African countries



such as Togo, Ghana and Nigeria, where they practiced Islam before coming to US and Hartford. There are about 70 or so members who regularly come to worship together and share their culture. Their common language is French.

I spoke to Abdul Aliu, their spokesperson, about their practice of Islam and he said “ the very first order that was given by our Prophet was ‘read.’ And that read doesn’t just mean read what is written, but read, observe, look, look around, understand... God is calling us to ‘read’ read and understand.”

When asked if they follow a Suni or Shia understanding of Islam, Abdul said “we don’t really deal with that, we deal with what Muhammad taught, what he taught we follow, what he didn’t teach... I don’t want to know.”

Originally, members would go to Windsor to worship with the community there, but about 5 years ago they decided to establish a Masjid here in Hartford.

Many of the members of the Masjid have been in Hartford for more that a decade and several are homeowners in the Habitat homes on S. Marshall St. It’s interesting to note the similarities of the Muslim immigrants of today, and the European immigrants of a century and a half ago. The need for a culturally familiar place of worship is strong. It feeds the soul as much as food feeds the body.